United Nations S/PV.7197

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7197th meeting

Monday, 16 June 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Iliichev	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Bliss
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Llanos
	China	Ms. Jiang Hua
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirty-fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2014/342)

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14-43082 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirty-fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2014/342)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedures, I invite Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/342, which contains the thirty-fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mindaoudou.

Ms. Mindaoudou (*spoke in French*): I would like thank the Council for this opportunity to speak before the Security Council this morning in order to present the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2014/342), dated 15 May, and to provide an update on recent developments in the country.

Côte d'Ivoire has started on the path towards sustainable stability. The economic growth rate is significant. The infrastructure is rapidly developing and private investment, attracted by a very favourable business environment and encouraged by the Government of President Alassane Ouattara, is increasing. Thanks to those positive economic developments and the increase in the minimum wage, the Ivorian people are beginning to share the dividends of peace.

As the report before the Council underscores, the reconciliation process has gained new momentum with the extension of the mandate of the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation in February. The Commission has continued its public hearings throughout the country so as to hear approximately 60,000 people before its mandate expires in September. The expectations for the Commission, which will make recommendations to the Government on compensation and other measures for the victims of the crisis in order to promote the reconciliation process, are immense.

In the context of the ongoing efforts to strengthen reconciliation and national cohesion, President Ouattara continues to reach out to those associated with the former regime, stressing that every Ivorian has a positive role to play in the country's future. At his request, several hundred people who left voluntarily, including senior officials of the Government of former President Laurent Gbagbo, have returned to Côte d'Ivoire. The Government of President Ouattara also continues to implement significant actions to reduce tensions with the former ruling party, the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), by granting bail to those still detained and by unfreezing the bank accounts of associates of the former regime. In addition, a number of homes belonging to those associated with the former President and occupied by the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) since the post-election crisis, have been abandoned and returned to their owners.

The process of strengthening the dialogue between the Government and the political opposition faces a number of challenges. As the report before the Council underscores, in April the Front populaire ivoirien stopped taking part in the dialogue with the Government, invoking the decision of the authorities to transfer the leader of the Young Patriots, Charles Blé Goudé, to the International Criminal Court at The Hague. The FPI has also called on its militants to no longer participate in the national processes, such as the public hearings of the the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation and the population census currently under way.

That said, I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made in the political dialogue, including in the discussions to identify and to draw up, by mutual agreement among the parties, a list of the associates of the former regime in detention and the bank accounts that are still frozen. Formal dialogue between the Government and the FPI was resumed on 22 May. That resumption of dialogue was followed by the publication of a joint statement in which the Government announced the provisional release of

150 people close to the former regime. Although the resumption of dialogue is a very positive development, some human rights defence organizations expressed concern that the decision to release those detainees following political discussions could indicate a lack of separation between executive and judiciary powers.

The presidential election in October 2015 is on the horizon, and the political environment is fluid. Four figures, including President Ouattara, have announced their candidacies, and the process of establishing a legal framework for the election is ongoing. On 20 May, the National Assembly adopted a draft law amending the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission, which will now have 17 commissioners who will represent the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, the ruling coalition, the political opposition and civil society. It is important to note that the members of the Independent Electoral Commission themselves will elect the President of the Commission. Several opposition parties have expressed reservations about the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission, and, in the context of the continuation of this process, it is important that all parties work together to agree on the rules and operating procedures of the body as well as other necessary measures to ensure the transparent and inclusive nature of the electoral process.

Promoting a culture of respect for human rights is essential for the success of the national reconciliation process. That requires immediate measures aimed at ending impunity by bringing to justice perpetrators of violations of human rights, regardless of their political affiliation. Important steps have been made in that direction, with, for example, the extension and strengthening of the mandate of the special unit responsible for investigating post-election violence in a fair and impartial manner. There are still challenges, however, and the Government continues to work on them, in particular justice, dozos and the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire.

Although the security situation has improved considerably since 2011, armed robberies, banditry and other criminal activities continue to contribute to instability throughout the country. Significant challenges remain in the west of the country, where some people still have claims in the areas of land tenure and nationality, which are issues related to the root causes of the Ivorian crisis. The national police and gendarmerie are not sufficiently deployed or do not have the equipment necessary to maintain order and enforce the law in many communities in the west of the country. Some FRCI personnel responsible for ensuring security in those areas have marred their legitimacy after acts of extortion and armed robbery that were committed against the very people they were supposed to protect.

At the same time, there is a strong commitment on the part of the highest authorities of the Government to promoting security sector reform. However, some people's lack of confidence in the national security institutions limits the possibilities of effective democratic control of the sector, which is a threat to the country's consolidation of stability. In several areas, dozos, who are traditional hunters, perform security tasks and have, on many occasions, committed acts of violations of human rights. The Government continues to encourage dozos to return to their traditional activities and is working to establish an appropriate legal framework for the management of the issue. Restoring public security throughout the country, which is an immediate priority, requires significant advances in the field of professionalizing defence and security forces through reforms designed to increase their legitimacy and effectiveness while including the participation of women in security institutions.

President Ouattara has set his Government the ambitious goal of disarming all ex-combatants before the end of June 2015. There has been significant progress; to date, 30,000 of the 70,000 ex-combatants identified have received support from the Government or the United Nations for their reintegration. With additional support from other partners, the Government should be able to achieve the goal of concluding the process of inclusive disarmament by offering all ex-combatants opportunities for sustainable reintegration before the 2015 elections.

After a year marked by a general calm in the border areas with Liberia, there were two attacks against Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire positions in western Côte d'Ivoire. During the last attack, the assailants expelled the FRCI from a village called Fete, exposing the population to unspeakable brutality. United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) troops intervened immediately, exchanged gunfire with the attackers, ousted them from the village and released the people. By that time, the attackers had already killed and maimed three soldiers and 10 civilians, including two children. I am proud to say that our troops have responded with bravery, even when they were directly exposed to

enemy fire, which shows their strong commitment to protecting civilians.

We are investigating the attack to determine if its perpetrators had crossed the Liberian border to enter into Ivorian territory. It is important to learn more about the identity of the attackers and their motives in order to prevent such attacks in the future. Our initial assessment is that such attacks highlight, on the one hand, the need to make further progress in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and, on the other hand, the importance for Côte d'Ivoire to have professional security forces capable of better protecting civilian populations.

We are also working with the United Nations Mission in Liberia to strengthen our cooperation. We are on the verge of finalizing a new strategic framework. Among our priorities, and in order to support our respective national partners, we are looking at how we can contribute to the strengthening of national capacities to better secure the borders. Strengthening security cooperation between the two Governments has contributed significantly to improving security in the border areas. In that regard, it is equally important to encourage the efforts made to empower local communities and include traditional leaders, youth and women in initiatives designed to promote stability, in the light of the close family and historical ties between the peoples living on both sides of the border. We also encourage the implementation of the transborder security strategy developed by the Mano River Union and endorsed by the Economic Community of West African States.

UNOCI has restructured its military component and has consolidated its presence in the west and other high-risk areas, in accordance with the Security Council's request. Since the end of December 2013, national security institutions are now entirely responsible for the security of senior Government officials and other political figures. At the end of May, we completed the withdrawal of 1,700 troops, pursuant to resolution 2112 (2013). Those reductions in military personnel were possible because of the significant progress made, which we welcome. However, we are aware that the upcoming elections in 2015 will be an important step for the country and will be conducted in a sensitive environment. It is therefore important, as recommended by the Secretary-General, to adopt a cautious approach with respect to the upcoming force reduction. However, we are striving to do more with less and believe, therefore, that it will be entirely possible to implement our mandate while further reducing the number of troops by 1,100.

Our vision regarding the use of our uniformed personnel during the election period is based on a new concept of mobility for operations, which is aimed at strengthening the capacity of our combat forces. The key to implementing the new concept of operations will be the creation, within UNOCI, of a quick-reaction force that will help us to bridge the gap in some areas of the country where there is no permanent military presence. Mobility, including the ability to deploy helicopter elements, is essential to the success of that project. In May, UNOCI organized a series of military exercises designed to develop the capacity to respond within 12 hours to any emergency situation anywhere in Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, the United Nations police is working closely with national partners to find ways to support the development of key strategic priorities such as security checks, training and mentoring for the national police and gendarmerie. The objective is to prepare them to resume their traditional role of policing and strengthening the rule of law in Côte d'Ivoire.

One of UNOCI's main concerns remains the restoration of confidence between the Ivorian people and the security forces in order to achieve a lasting peace. To achieve that goal, the security forces must meet standard norms in terms of professionalism and ethics. Our police forces will continue to provide second-string support to national law enforcement, which is a particularly important role in some areas of the country where there is no military presence, and during the electoral period.

Peacekeeping is a unique partnership, a collaborative effort for the cause of peace. I would like to conclude by expressing my sincere gratitude for the effective partnership that we have established. The Council, the Secretariat, UNOCI, our troops and troop- and police-contributing countries and the United Nations country team all work closely with the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire, and we support them in their efforts to build a lasting peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Mindaoudou for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor

during your presidency, Sir, I am pleased to extend to you our sincere congratulations on the occasion of your great country, the Russian Federation, assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June.

My delegation takes note of the excellent report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/342) of 15 May 2014 and thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her briefing on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. I must say that my delegation fully shares the view of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire she has just provided, and I would like at this stage to make a few brief remarks to buttress that shared perspective.

I note with satisfaction and welcome the exemplary cooperation that characterizes the relations between my country and the United Nations, in particular through the presence of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The remarkable advances that Côte d'Ivoire has seen since the end of the crisis it experienced have been a result, in particular, of how excellent those relations are. Indeed, we note that UNOCI has spared no effort in supporting Côte d'Ivoire in its various post-crisis reconstruction projects.

In terms of security, the situation remains broadly stable, and security sector reform is accelerating, as is disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. That led, on 1 May, as noted in the report, to the disarmament and demobilization of 22,590 ex-combatants.

Political dialogue is ongoing and is taking place in a responsible manner. In that respect, the United Nations facilitation, in particular that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has proven very valuable. The national reconciliation process has been successfully relaunched following the renewal of the mandate of the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation.

Economically, growth is increasing, and the Government intends to focus on the fight against poverty in order to make that economic growth more inclusive. We are please to be able to corroborate that the good results in various areas that are mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General are a result of that exemplary cooperation.

I would also like to highlight that my Government's constructive cooperation with the Security Council has led, after a transparent review of the sanctions regime in Côte d'Ivoire, to the lifting of the embargo on diamonds produced in Côte d'Ivoire and the partial lifting of the arms embargo, in accordance with resolution 2153 (2014) adopted on 29 April.

All those positive developments have supported the return of normalcy and stability in Côte d'Ivoire, and that is why my delegation fully endorses the plan to progressively reduce UNOCI's military contingents, as proposed in the relevant paragraphs of the Secretary-General's report on the issue. It is evident that, given all those developments, the main challenge remains the consolidation of a stable security situation, in particular given the upcoming elections in 2015.

In that regard, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, and his Government are focusing all necessary efforts on the elections being held in a peaceful climate in order to ensure lasting stability in Côte d'Ivoire.

In conclusion, and given all the foregoing, I would like to state that my delegation supports the renewal of UNOCI's mandate, is very interested in the project to create a regional quick-reaction force, as mentioned in paragraphs 68, 69, and 70 of the Secretary-General's report, and supports their effective implementation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no further speakers on the list.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7198

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7198th meeting
Tuesday, 17 June 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Zagaynov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Gálvez
	China	Mr. Cai Weiming
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hunter
	United States of America	Mr. Wachtel

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

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14-43226 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2014/409 and S/2014/408, each of which contains the text of a draft resolution. It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolutions before it.

I shall first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/409, submitted by Australia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and France.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2160 (2014).

I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/408, submitted by Australia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and France.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2161 (2014).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7199

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7199th meeting
Tuesday, 17 June 2014, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Zagaynov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Ms. Millicay
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Gálvez
	China	Mr. Cai Weiming
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. McKell
	United States of America	Mr. Lord

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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14-43238 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Prosecutor Bensouda.

Ms. Bensouda: Today's briefing marks the nineteenth visit of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to the Council to update its members on the situation in Darfur. December 2014 will mark the twentieth such briefing, and March 2015 will mark 10 years since the Council referred the Darfur situation to the International Criminal Court. None of these milestones gives cause for celebration.

In the close to 10 years since the Council's much-lauded referral of the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC), systematic and widespread crimes have continued to be committed with total impunity in Darfur. It is indeed an understatement to say that we have failed the Darfur victims who continue to bear the brunt of those crimes. Over the past years, a number of players, including the International Criminal Court, the United Nations and others, have been engaged in efforts to bring justice and other forms of relief to Darfur's victims. The time has now come for us to take a critical look at the impact of all our efforts vis-à-vis Darfur. What have we achieved, in concrete terms? Have we lived up to the expectations of Darfur's victims? Sadly, the intellectually honest answer is a resounding "no".

While the International Criminal Court may have significantly contributed to raising awareness of the massive and systematic crimes committed in Darfur, the Court's best contribution to ending impunity — through a judicial process that independently, fairly and impartially assesses the evidence and determines guilt or innocence — is yet to be achieved. The reality is that the International Criminal Court's judicial process cannot take place without arrests. Darfur suspects remain at large and no meaningful steps have been taken to apprehend them and bring them to justice. To be clear, the Court does not have the power to arrest indictees. It is the responsibility of States and others to arrest and surrender indictees to the custody of the International Criminal Court.

There are critical questions to which Darfur's victims are seeking answers from the Council. How much longer will legality and accountability be sacrificed at the altar of political expediency? How much suffering should Darfur's victims endure for the Council to act decisively on the situation in Darfur? The Court remains firmly convinced that enforcing warrants of arrest in Darfur is a key element of peace and stability and of ending the victims' suffering.

Today we are in the same position we have been in since 2007, when warrants of arrests were issued against Mr. Ahmad Harun and Mr. Ali Kushayb. Even with the addition of another three arrest warrants — two for Mr. Omer Al-Bashir in 2009 and 2010, and one for Mr. Abdel Raheem Hussein in 2012 — the situation has not changed. It is a sad reality that action from the Council has not been forthcoming when it matters most for Darfur's victims. That not only reflects badly on the international criminal justice system, of which the ICC is only a part, it also greatly undermines the Council's credibility as an instrument of international peace and security. The time is long overdue for the Government of the Sudan's consistent defiance of Security Council resolutions to be met by decisive action from the Council.

Recent allegations that reporting from the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has been subject to manipulation, with the intentional effect of covering up crimes committed against civilians and peacekeepers, in particular those committed by the Government of the Sudan, should be a matter of concern for all of us. These allegations call for a thorough, independent and public inquiry. While the responsibility for such manipulation may lie with a handful of individuals, it impugns the credibility of the mission as a whole and deprives advocates of peace and justice of an essential tool for evaluating the ever-evolving situation in Darfur. The victims in Darfur, and the peacekeepers who have sacrificed their lives, deserve better. We all do. It is to be hoped that the Council — and, indeed, the United Nations as a whole — will take immediate and concrete steps to

establish the full facts and take appropriate action if the allegations prove to be well-founded.

The implementation of the non-essential contacts policy, particularly with regard to the Darfur situation, deserves closer scrutiny within the United Nations system. As my Office suggested in its June 2013 report (see S/PV.6974), the application of the non-essential contacts policy requires a rigorous assessment as to whether such contacts are indeed strictly required for carrying out essential United Nations-mandated duties. Without such an ongoing assessment, both before and after contacts with those subject to the Court's arrest warrants, the potential for those individuals to take advantage of the goodwill of the United Nations to legitimize their own actions is great. In order to dispel misperceptions about United Nations engagements with indictees, the Organization might wish, to the extent that it is possible, to make public all its contacts with those subject to ICC warrants of arrest, including, as far as is necessary, providing explanations of why such contacts are deemed to have been strictly required for carrying out essential United Nations-mandated duties.

We have taken note of Mr. Omer Al-Bashir's travels during this reporting period, including his visits to States that are party to the Rome Statute. States parties are clearly obliged to cooperate with the ICC in arresting and surrendering those subject to ICC warrants. In a recent Chamber decision, the judges made it clear that States parties must consult with them about any problems they have identified that may hinder their cooperation with the Court in effecting arrests. On the issue of immunity, the judges also found that there could be no lack of clarity about Mr. Omer Al-Bashir's lack of immunity under article 27 of the Rome Statute.

The question of Mr. Bashir's travels remains a matter before the Council. Such travels are not simply a challenge for the States parties that he may visit, it is a challenge for all States to provide the necessary support and assistance to one another to ensure that an effective arrest and surrender can take place. In that regard, it is worth recalling that in addition to the obligations of the Rome Statute, all States Members of the United Nations have been urged by the Council to cooperate with the Court's investigations and prosecutions in Darfur. As the Pre-Trial Chamber recently emphasized,

> "When the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, refers a situation to the Court as constituting a threat to international peace and security, it must be expected that the Council would respond by way of taking such measures which are considered appropriate, if there is an apparent failure on the part of States parties to the Statute or the Sudan to cooperate in fulfilling the Court's mandate as entrusted to them by the Council. Otherwise, if there is no follow-up action on the part of the Security Council, any referral by the Council to the ICC under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter would never achieve its ultimate goal, namely, to put an end to impunity."

Accordingly, the Chamber concluded, "any such referral would become futile."

I share the deep concern of UNAMID's Deputy Joint Special Representative for Political Affairs, Joseph Mutaboba, and the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Sudan, Ali Al-Za'tari, about the increasing violence in Darfur and the immense number of people who continue to be displaced. I likewise deplore the increasing constraints being put on those who are trying to aid the displaced, making it more and more difficult for them even to properly monitor the conditions of the displaced. The deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid must end.

Equally worrying are the ongoing patterns of aerial bombardments and armed attacks on civilian populations by militia and Janjaweed, and in particular the involvement of the newest iteration of the Janjaweed, the Rapid Support Forces, led by Mohamed Hamdan. It is particularly disturbing that in February the Rapid Support Forces shifted their operations from North Kordofan to Darfur. My Office's factual indicators seem to illustrate a similar pattern of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians by the Rapid Support Forces. In all the reported attacks, crimes against civilians were allegedly committed from the end of February onwards, coinciding with the deployment of the Rapid Support Forces to Darfur. In 12 of the 17 reported attacks, civilian villages were set ablaze. In the majority of the attacks, the presence of rebels in the attacked areas is not reported, while in others the information available is ambiguous. All of the attacks were carried out in areas located in South and North Darfur.

This reporting period has also witnessed an increasing pattern of gang rapes of women and girls. I have just released a comprehensive policy paper on sexual and gender-based crimes. My Office recognizes

that sexual and gender-based crimes are among the gravest of crimes under the Rome Statute. The policy paper will guide the Office's work in this area in Darfur and all other situations under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

Attacks on students, on civil society and on local leaders — in particular the 21 January attack in Zalingei, in central Darfur, in the course of which security forces attacked and beat students who were protesting military fees imposed on residents in support of military operations — are also very disturbing. Equally disturbing is the 3 April attack at the University of Nyala, in South Darfur, during which approximately 100 students were beaten and dispersed with tear gas, with seven arrested. That followed a demonstration against the arrest of four students who had criticized the Government over ongoing killings, lootings and burnings in Darfur. The use of violence against unarmed civilians must be addressed.

Let me repeat what I have stated to the Council many times before. The Government of the Sudan, as the territorial State, has the primary responsibility and is fully able to implement the warrants, consistent with its sovereign authority. It has consistently failed to do so. At the same time, it has also failed to provide any meaningful measure of justice at the national level.

I look forward to constructively interacting with the Council on the Darfur issue. What is needed is a dramatic shift in the Council's approach to arresting Darfur suspects. I appreciate the efforts being made to ensure that the Council produces a substantive response to the eight outstanding communications from the Court. Likewise, I believe that concerted efforts to promote cooperation with the Court may help to fill the gap. In that regard, I kindly call on all States and the Council to find creative ways to support those among them that may be most vulnerable to planned visits by Mr. Omer Al-Bashir or other individuals wanted under ICC arrest warrants.

I thank the members of the Council for their attention and for remaining actively seized of the Darfur situation. Darfur does not have to be a failure for the Council, for the United Nations or for the International Criminal Court. It is incumbent upon all of us to take concrete and effective action now to ensure that our efforts to protect victims in Darfur show tangible results and do not go down in history as an indefensible failure.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): I thank Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, for her briefing on the recent developments in the Darfur situation.

Darfur was the first case the Security Council referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC). As such, the situation has given us an opportunity to realize the vision of putting an end to impunity, through close interplay between the Council and the ICC, for those who committed serious crimes against the human conscience. At the same time, the situation has imposed upon us various challenges that we have to confront in order to make the interplay more constructive and relevant to the maintenance of international peace and security. So far, the Council and the ICC have not lived up to that expectation. The situation has been tarnished by the lack of cooperation, not only on the part of the Sudanese Government but also on the part of other States, which have international obligations to cooperate with the ICC.

Although the ICC has reported to the Security Council that there have been instances of non-cooperation, efforts within the Council to respond to the reports were defeated because the Council failed to forge unity on what would be the most proper way to do so. It was the Security Council that referred the situation to the ICC; therefore, follow-up action on the part of the Council to the referral is not only fair but also necessary. Despite the difficulties we face, the Council and the ICC need to redouble their efforts to that end. In addition, more rigorous consultations between the United Nations and the ICC should be encouraged to close any potential communications gap. Making their respective work compatible and mutually reinforcing is essential to bring justice and peace to the region.

The international community created the ICC out of the conviction that holding perpetrators of serious crimes against humanity accountable could prevent the emergence of such criminals in future. The current situation in Darfur seems to confirm that conviction in the reverse. As the culture of impunity continues to prevail, security in Darfur is deteriorating because perpetrators do not need to be concerned about the consequences of their crimes. The outcome is an ever

worsening security situation and unabated human suffering, driving many innocent people from their homes. That vicious cycle must be stopped. Delivering justice to those who have committed heinous crimes is the first step to that end. A robust monitoring and review of alleged crimes involving international human rights and humanitarian laws, such as various forms of attacks against civilians, should be stressed. Proactive campaigns to pursue those who have committed sexual and gender-based crimes against the most vulnerable must be given top priority. International cooperation in that regard needs to be further solicited.

The situation in Darfur and the role of the ICC in it is a litmus test of our ability to bring peace and stability through the pursuit of international criminal justice. The Council needs to consider what support it can render to the ICC to accomplish that goal. We continue to work with other Council members and the ICC in that vein.

Mr. Cai Weiming (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her briefing.

Recently, the situation in Darfur has been generally calm with some ups and downs. The Sudanese Government has stepped up its preparations for the national dialogue, actively implemented the Darfur Peace Agreement, promoted communal reconciliation and combated crimes. It has taken some positive steps with regard to humanitarian access. China welcomes that and supports the efforts by the Sudanese Government in advancing the political process and reconciliation.

China is deeply concerned about the attacks against civilians, United Nations peacekeepers and international humanitarian relief workers that took place in Darfur. We are deeply troubled by the increasing number of internally displaced persons. We call on all armed rebel groups to stop the violence immediately and take part in the political process.

The United Nations plays an important role in promoting a solution to the Darfur problem. China supports and encourages dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations and the Sudanese Government and supports the important role of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur in maintaining peace and stability in Darfur.

The question of Darfur is very complicated, as it involves the political process, security and stability, development and reconstruction, humanitarian assistance and judicial justice. Among those aspects, the political process is the most crucial. Only when sustained progress in the political process is made, can Darfur enjoy lasting peace, which will pave the way for work in other areas, such as judicial justice and finding a comprehensive solution to the Darfur question.

China has not changed its position on the ICC in regard to Darfur.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Fatou Bensouda, for presenting her nineteenth report on the situation in Darfur and the Court's ongoing judicial activities.

The Council is meeting again at a time when the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court against four individuals indicted for war crimes, crimes against humanity and, for one of them, genocide have not yet been executed. The Government of the Sudan has the primary responsibility to comply with resolution 1593 (2005) and to fully implement the arrest warrants. It continues to refuse to do so. At the same time, as the Prosector just recalled, the Sudanese Government has failed to implement measures to effectively fight impunity at the national level. More generally, the report of the ICC Prosecutor reminds us that, despite the 55 resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the Sudan since 2004, almost none of the requests contained in those resolutions has been implemented. That is unacceptable.

It is with great concern that we note the cases of non-cooperation with the Court. We are particularly dismayed that the President of the Sudan, Omer Al-Bashir, continues to make trips in the region, including to States parties to the Rome Statute.

Since our last meeting with the Prosecutor, in December (see S/PV.7080), the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur has seriously deteriorated. That is the result of an increase in conflicts between tribes and communities, the deployment by the Sudanese Government of Rapid Support Forces, attacks by rebel groups and indiscriminate shelling by the Sudanese Armed Forces. What is particularly worrying are the serious abuses against civilians, particularly sexual violence against women and violence against children.

The clashes are becoming more frequent and increasingly deadly in many parts of Darfur. An additional 320,000 people have been displaced in Darfur since 1 January, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons to over 2 million. We call

on all parties to ensure free and unhindered access for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and humanitarian actors throughout Darfur. Serious threats continue to affect the safety and security of humanitarian workers and UNAMID personnel. Attacks that target them are unacceptable. However, to date, none of the investigations by the Sudanese authorities on attacks against Blue Helmets has led to any convictions.

The report of Ms. Bensouda outlines the crimes currently being perpetrated in Darfur that are likely to fall under the Rome Statute. We encourage the Office of the Prosecutor to continue to monitor the situation in Darfur, to gather information on alleged crimes and to consider opening new investigations into the situation in Darfur. We take this opportunity to reiterate our request to all Member States, whether they are parties to the Rome Statute or not, and all regional and international organizations to cooperate fully with the ICC, as required by resolution 1593 (2005).

For its part, the Security Council should ensure effective monitoring of cases referred to the ICC. It is a question of credibility and efficiency. In that regard, we strongly hope that the ongoing efforts aimed at leading the Security Council to respond to the eight formal communications that the Court has conveyed to it to report cases of non-cooperation will soon bear fruit. While the Security Council must be consistent, Member States and the Secretariat should be likewise. That applies in particular with regard to the elimination of non-essential contacts with those accused. The directives of the Secretary-General regarding contacts between United Nations officials and those subject to an arrest warrant or a summons issued by the Court must be strictly observed.

We express our support for Ms. Bensouda's proposal that the Secretary-General initiate an in-depth, independent and public investigation into the allegations of information manipulation contained in UNAMID reports, following the revelations made recently by a former spokesperson of the Mission. It is essential that the Security Council have the most complete and reliable information possible on what is happening in Darfur.

To conclude, I would like to assure the ICC Prosecutor of Luxembourg's complete support the resolute work that her Office continues to carry out in the fight against impunity for crimes committed in Darfur. We join the call that Ms. Bensouda has launched today for stronger action by the Security Council and States parties to the Rome Statute so that justice can finally be rendered to the victims of the Darfur conflict. Indeed, a lasting peace in Darfur will remain out of reach as long as the persons accused of having committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur do not have to answer for their actions.

Ms. Millicay (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina thanks the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Fatou Bensouda, for presenting her nineteenth report in accordance with resolution 1593 (2005).

Argentina deplores the continued violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur. In resolution 2138 (2014), adopted in February, the Security Council noted that it was imperative that all parties refrain from any violence against civilians, in particular vulnerable groups such as women and children, and from committing violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights law. In the same resolution, the Council deplored the continuing obstacles to the work of the Panel of Experts and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and called on the Sudanese Government to lift the state of emergency in Darfur and to ensure accountability for serious crimes.

Argentina once again commends the Office of the Prosecutor's focus on monitoring the crimes currently being committed, including aerial bombardments affecting civilians, which are clearly referred to in resolution 2138 (2014); ground attacks against civilians, which have escalated since February; continuing sexual and gender-based violence, which has become a prominent element of the conflict in Darfur; attacks on human rights and civil society activists; kidnappings of and attacks on humanitarian workers and UNAMID staff; obstacles to access for humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping personnel; and the forced displacement of civilians, who now include 250,000 newly displaced, thus bringing the number of internally displaced persons in Darfur to 2 million people. Argentina, as always, encourages the Prosecutor to continue to investigate such acts, which may qualify as crimes under the Rome Statute, and takes this opportunity to recognize the value of the policy paper on sexual and gender-based crimes published by the Office of the Prosector.

Another crucial aspect that the Prosecutor usually highlights in her reports on Darfur is, of course, that of cooperation. The Sudanese Government is required,

under resolution 1593 (2005), to cooperate with the Court and render all assistance necessary. The States parties to the Rome Statute are obliged to cooperate under that instrument. But the resolution also urges all other United Nations Member States and members of regional organizations to cooperate with the Court. Implementing the arrest warrants is an essential element of that cooperation. Currently, the arrest warrants issued by the Court since 2007 on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity have still not been implemented. Argentina regrets the position taken by the Government of the Sudan vis-à-vis the Court, since the Sudan's own citizens continue to be victims of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

It is also regrettable that other States, including States parties to the Rome Statute, have disregarded their obligation to cooperate with the Court. Consequently, Argentina again urges all States to act as pursuant to the Rome Statute, and also calls on regional and subregional organizations, as presidential statement S/PRST/2013/12 notes, to cooperate with the Court in order to prevent impunity from prevailing.

The issue of cooperation with the Court leads directly to the follow-up by the Council of its referrals to the ICC. The Prosecutor herself recalls in her briefing the Court's eight communications to the Council on cases of non-cooperation. It is of concern that none of those has received an answer or has been acted upon by the Council. In its presidential statement S/PRST/2013/2, the Council committed to an effective follow-up of referrals to the Court. To date, however, despite the efforts of many Council members, it has not been possible to reach an understanding on the mechanism for that follow up. We again urge all Council members to advocate for the responsible follow-up of the referrals, since this body cannot ignore its referrals to the Court.

Both General Assembly resolution 67/295 and presidential statement S/PRST/2014/5 recognize the issuance by the Secretary-General of guidelines on non-essential contacts with officials of the Organization by persons who are the subject of arrest warrants of the International Criminal Court. That is due to the recognition of the crucial role of cooperation with the Court for the success of its mandate, including in cases of referrals by the Security Council.

Argentina, not in its capacity as a State party to the Statute but as a Member of the Organization, has always maintained that the Secretary-General must ensure the strict implementation of the guidelines. In that regard, my country agrees with the Prosecutor on the need for a rigorous assessment of the necessity of every such contact in order to comply with United Nations mandates. Furthermore, any contact that is deemed essential following such an assessment must be brought to the attention of the Court before it takes place. We also encourage the Secretary-General to inform Member States, which adopt such mandates.

Such measures are necessary because contacts with United Nations officials, in particular senior officials and field staff, including as part of a peacekeeping operation, could not only affect the Court but also fundamentally undermine the credibility of the United Nations. We are also concerned about the Prosecutor's statement with regard to the way in which UNAMID's reporting of crimes committed against civilians and peacekeeping forces may have been handled. We believe that it is imperative that the Secretary-General investigate such allegations.

As on every occasion that the Council talks about the International Criminal Court, allow me recall that there are two aspects of referrals to the Court, including in the case of Darfur, with which Argentina does not agree. One is the exception of the Court's jurisdiction for nationals of States not party to the Rome Statute and the other is the statement that the United Nations will not bear the costs of the referral. Argentina's position in that regard is well known. I will therefore not reiterate it but will, however, repeat that both such matters are not in compliance with the Rome Statute.

The Court is an institution that was founded on the common understanding that serious crimes should not go unpunished and that justice and the punishment of perpetrators help to prevent such crimes. I therefore wish to commend the work of the Prosecutor and of her Office on the follow-up of this referral by the Security Council. I thank her for her continuing readiness to dialogue with the Council. Finally, I would like to once again reaffirm Argentina's strong commitment to the International Criminal Court.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her briefing. Nigeria notes the concerns of the Office of the Prosecutor about the recent allegations of the manipulation of reporting by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and of the cover-up of crimes committed against civilians and peacekeepers. We share those concerns and urge

the Secretary-General to look into the allegations with a view to determining the truth. It is essential that the United Nations report on UNAMID convey the truth about the situation on the ground. That is crucial to maintaining the integrity not only of United Nations reporting but also of the United Nations itself.

We are greatly concerned about the increase in violence in Darfur, which has had a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. The displacement of more than 200,000 persons in the first three months of 2014 alone underscores the magnitude of the problem. We are deeply disturbed by the difficulty experienced by humanitarian actors, including the United Nations, in terms of access to those in need. We deplore the restrictions placed on humanitarian agencies, which have made it increasingly challenging for them to monitor the number of people displaced from their homes.

The report indicates that the Office of the Prosecutor is currently monitoring several trends that could constitute crimes under the Rome Statute. Those include alleged attacks by rebel groups on civilians, as well as alleged attacks on humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers. The dangers to humanitarian workers and peacekeepers in Darfur are real. Only last month, a Rwandan peacekeeper tragically lost his life while mediating a peace meeting in the village of Kabkabiya. Three other peacekeepers were wounded on the same occasion. The picture is the same for humanitarian workers, who work in extremely challenging circumstances and at great risk to their safety.

We look forward to seeing the outcome of the monitoring activities of the Office of the Prosecutor in Darfur.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and we welcome the presence of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Ms. Fatou Bensouda. We also thank her for her briefing to the Council on the situation in Darfur, pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005).

The adoption of resolution 1593 (2005) under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which referred the situation of Darfur to the International Criminal Court, provides for the Court's jurisdiction to extend to a State not party to the Rome Statute, in this case the Sudan, and compels it to cooperate with the Court. The Council has the primary responsibility for following up the situation in Darfur in the International Criminal Court, which should not be seen as having been discharged solely by referring the situation to the Court, holding such debates or receiving briefings from the Prosecutor.

The eight communications from the Court to the Council on non-cooperation in the case of Darfur are an example of the need for that follow-up. In that regard, the Security Council should continue due dialogue with the Court and its Prosecutor and respond to the Court's requests. The silence of this body with regard to those requests indicates a failure in meeting its responsibility. Chile therefore supports effectively following up the situations referred by the Council to the Court, to ensure the effectiveness and impact of the Council's resolutions.

In order to ensure successful investigations and prosecutions by the International Criminal Court, States must duly cooperate, either by virtue of being parties to the Rome Statute or in line with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as provided in resolution 1593 (2005).

The specific case of Darfur has generated a series of situations of non-cooperation with the Court, in particular and quite regrettably on behalf of the Sudan as well as on the part of other States. Chile therefore reiterates its call upon all the relevant States to cooperate with the International Criminal Court and to comply with the rulings handed down by the Court.

The humanitarian situation in Darfur as described in the recent report is even more worrisome than it was in the Prosecutor's previous report. This year, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has surpassed the numbers of 2011 and 2012. All told that is half as much as those who had to flee their homes in 2013, resulting in more than 2 million displaced persons in Darfur since the conflict erupted.

We are also concerned that, according to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, serious crimes falling under the Rome Statute continue to be perpetrated. We underscore the need for ongoing support to those institutions aimed at strengthening respect for the rule of law and human rights, while promoting full compliance with the obligation to cooperate with the Court and with the Prosecutor.

On repeated occasions the Council has addressed the humanitarian situation in Darfur. In particular we call for immediate compliance with resolutions 2138 (2014) and 2148 (2014), referring to the need to cease the

violence, particularly against civilians and especially against women and children.

My delegation welcomes the briefing on the recent judicial activities of the Prosecutor's Office, especially in the case of *Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain*, and the registering of individuals outside of the Sudan who face the Court's arrest warrants.

Chile underscores the serious nature of the crimes set out in the report, including aerial bombardments against civilians, sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against human rights activists and members of civil society and community leaders. Abductions and attacks have also been carried out against humanitarian assistance providers and staff of peacekeeping operations. We encourage the Office of the Prosecutor to continue gathering evidence on new allegations of crimes perpetrated in Darfur, as that could serve as the basis of new investigations.

Chile is concerned about the alleged manipulation of reports carried out by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, as described in paragraph 10 of the Prosecutor's report. Those would cover up crimes against civilians and against peacekeepers. We firmly support an investigation by the Secretary-General into that matter.

Lastly, my country emphasizes the importance of maintaining appropriate relations between the Court and the Council with regard to their jurisdiction and responsibility. We also reiterate our commitment in support of the work of the Court and of the Prosecutor.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for her presentation of the nineteenth report of her Office to the Security Council. We have taken note of the recent judicial activities undertaken by the Court in relation to the continued monitoring of serious crimes committed in Darfur and the status of cooperation by the Government of the Sudan and other parties.

Our position on this debate has always been consistent. It is now about nine years since the Council referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC. However, those present might remember that since February 2009, African Heads of State and Government adopted during different African Union Summits decisions to request that the proceedings against President Omer Hassan A. Al-Bashir be deferred in accordance with article 16 of the Rome Statute. The African Union, while reiterating its commitment to the fight against impunity, has stressed that the search for justice should be pursued in a way that does not impede or jeopardize efforts aimed at promoting lasting peace. Subsequently, it decided that all African countries that received President Al-Bashir since his indictment were in conformity with the decision of the African Union Summit and were pursuing the same goal of peace in the region. Therefore, we believe that reports of non-cooperation by African States impede efforts of the regional organization for peace in Darfur. In that regard, we are convinced that a concerted approach among the United Nations, the African Union and the Government of the Sudan is the best way to ensure accountability, while addressing the conflict in Darfur. Indeed, peace and justice cannot be mutually exclusive.

On the security situation in Darfur, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing hostilities that have continued to increase the suffering of the Darfuri people. It is particularly unacceptable for armed groups to use civilians as human shields in their fight against the Government.

Furthermore, Rwanda strongly condemns the repeated attacks on peacekeepers of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), especially the recent incident of 24 May, in which a Rwandan peacekeeper was killed and three others were wounded.

We are very troubled by allegations of the manipulation of UNAMID reports, with the intent to cover up crimes committed against civilians and peacekeepers. We hope that UNAMID and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will provide clarification on that issue.

A decade after the start of the conflict in Darfur, the Government of the Sudan needs to do much more in ensuring that those who committed human rights violations and other crimes, including sexual and gender-based violence and attacks on peacekeepers, are held accountable.

We also need to emphasize the responsibility of the Government of the Sudan in ensuring the protection of its people. Similarly, it is important that the Government takes concrete steps in addressing the root causes of repeated inter-communal violence in Darfur.

The last 10 years of conflict in Darfur have proved that there can be no military solution to the conflict. Only a genuine political dialogue can bring peace

to Darfur. In that regard, we believe that the time has come for all warring parties to the conflict to understand that reality. In that respect, we commend the efforts of Mohamed ibn Chambas, Joint Special Representative for Operations and Management in UNAMID, which are aimed at convincing the non-signatory movements to join the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Likewise, we commend his efforts and those of President Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, in facilitating the national dialogue. It is important that the international community redouble its efforts in supporting all of those processes.

To conclude, let me state again that Rwanda — as a member of the Security Council, State member of the African Union and African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur troop- and police-contributing country — will continue to work towards sustainable peace, genuine reconciliation and accountability for the most serious crimes in Darfur.

Mr. Baublys (Lithuania): I would like to start by thanking Ms. Fatou Bensouda for her briefing and her nineteenth report to the Council on the situation in Darfur. Both the report and the Prosecutor's briefing show that the overall situation in Darfur has not improved since she last briefed the Council in December (see S/PV.7080). On the contrary, over the past six months the situation in Darfur has continued to deteriorate. Clashes between the Government and the rebels continue. Civilians are affected by indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. Approximately 250,000 people have been newly displaced, including due to attacks carried out by the Sudanese Government supported Rapid Support Forces on villages and the camps of internally-displaced persons. That number dwarfs the number of people displaced in 2011 and 2012. Humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers are subject to attacks throughout Darfur. The deliberate obstruction of humanitarian assistance must end.

The report also notes the persistence of sexual and gender-based violence in Darfur. I strongly condemn those horrendous crimes. It is imperative that an end be put to the culture of impunity that allows sexual and gender-based crimes to continue unabated. An investigation into such cases should be made a priority. All perpetrators of those and other serious crimes must be brought to account. The Government of the Sudan should do more to end attacks against civilians, fight impunity, ensure accountability and guarantee justice for the victims. Justice must be made the cornerstone of a lasting and sustainable peace agreement in Darfur.

The report before us contains multiple reminders of the challenges the Prosecutor's Office is facing in fulfilling its mandate. Resolution 1593 (2005) remains a dead letter and has yet to be implemented. After 10 years and countless victims since the beginning of the conflict in Darfur, only four senior officials have been indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity; one of them is also accused of genocide. They are the only ones who have been held to account.

We again urge the Government of the Sudan to meet its obligations and to cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC), including on the enforcement of the arrest warrants issued by the Court. All States parties to the Rome Statute and all relevant regional and international organizations are required to cooperate fully with the ICC, in accordance with resolution 1593 (2005).

We welcome the guidelines issued by the Secretary-General last year on non-essential contacts on the part of members of the Secretariat with individuals subject to ICC arrest warrants, yet we share the concerns expressed by the Prosecutor on high-level contacts with individuals under ICC arrest warrants.

The Council can do to more to assist the Court. One obvious step is to list individuals under ICC arrest warrants on the Sudan Sanctions Committee. Another step is to ensure an effective follow-up of the cases referred to the ICC and to answer the correspondence the Court has addressed to the Council on cases of non-cooperation. As a matter of fact, in a presidential statement on the protection of civilians last year (S/PRST/2013/2), Council members committed themselves to carrying out effective follow-up. However, there has been no agreement on a mechanism.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Lithuania's full support for and cooperation with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in carrying out her important mandate.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I too thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her report. It is a report with a particularly serious tone that warrants not only the Security Council but also the Secretariat to question the impact of the activities we have undertaken for the benefit of the civilian population in Darfur.

The immense region of Darfur has been the site of atrocities since 2002. At the very start, the Council created the International Commission of Inquiry for Darfur and, on that basis, referred the situation in Darfur to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2005. The first arrest warrants of the ICC were delivered in 2007. Furthermore, the Council has not remained inactive on the political front as it has actively participated in the mediation efforts with the African Union. It also deployed to Darfur one of its largest peacekeeping operations, the African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

But let us be clear enough to acknowledge that, failing the genuine implementation of resolution 1593 (2005), the situation has only gotten worse. We have not succeeded in meeting our responsibility to protect the civilian population in Darfur. Almost 400,000 new internally displaced persons (IDPs) since February 2014, aerial bombings of villages, sexual violence on a massive scale committed against women, militias practicing scorched-earth policies attacking the IDP camp at Khor Abeche — the destruction of an entire people is the goal. The only development is that they changed the name of the Janjaweed militias. They now go by the name Rapid Support Forces, but the crimes are the same. Their modus operandi remains the same as that they followed in the darkest periods of the conflict.

The tragedy has taken on a national dimension. The action of the Rapid Support Forces and the violation of fundamental rights involve the entire territory. Although the Sudanese Government says that it is ready to launch a comprehensive process of national dialogue and constitutional review, its calls to action are void of any meaning as it increases the negative signals it is putting out — arresting opponents, bombing of civilian targets and sentencing Mariam Yahya Ibrahim to death for abandoning Islam.

UNAMID's effectiveness at protecting civilians is now open to question. The Security Council has therefore decided to undertake a strategic review of the force in order to improve its responsiveness and to allow it to refocus on its principal task — the protection of civilians. The Mission has been reproached for self-censoring, for minimizing the responsibility of the Sudanese authorities in the attacks, and for failing to take into full account the crimes that it had witnessed. Those are serious allegations. The Secretariat should seek to remedy the situation. Many of us also regret that the policy of avoiding essential contacts with persons subject to International Criminal Court arrest warrants, defined by the Secretary-General, has been sullied in the context of Darfur.

But we cannot put the blame for failure on the Mission alone. UNAMID is not a mission for imposing peace. We ask it to protect civilians who are directly affected, but at the same time to work in harmony with security forces that are guilty of crimes. If the Council is genuinely serious about implementing the peace agreement and protecting civilians, we must go beyond a strategic review of UNAMID. The fight against impunity must be reinvigorated. We cannot continue discussing the role of the Council in the fight against sexual violence and confine ourselves, as we are doing now, to asking UNAMID and the agencies to undertake training activities on how victims should fill out a complaint form. That is not serious.

Not a single head of militia is worried. President Thabo Mbeki himself said so before the Council. We must in fact pursue and arrest responsible parties if we want to finally bring an end to the violence in Darfur.

We are divided on the opportunity to arrest President Al-Bashir, which is unfortunate. It is also unfortunate that certain States parties to the Rome Statute continue to meet with him. France believes that such visits show disrespect for resolution 1593 (2005) and States' obligations under the Rome Statute. Beyond a particular interpretation of the law, one must also think of the impact of such visits, which can only encourage the Sudanese security forces and the militias to continue their practices.

Let us look towards the future. With respect to the Secretariat and the agencies, that means that the principal actors must have better communication with the Court; that aplies in particular to the African Union/United Nations Joint Special Representative, the Darfur Peace Agreement, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme. Let us be more consistent in the information that is disseminated and in the activities we deploy on the ground. We need a results-based approach, not an approach based on the number of seminars we hold.

As for the Council, we must measure the negative impact of our inability to implement resolution 1593

(2005). We see it in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, where the Sudanese Government is repeating the same old practices against the population, including aerial bombings that target hospitals and schools. We see it throughout the region, in South Sudan and in the Central African Republic, where perpetrators of massive abuses believe — wrongly — that they enjoy total impunity. It is not a question of whether or not we support the ICC, but a matter of the maintenance of peace and security throughout the region.

In conclusion, I reiterate our full confidence in the Prosecutor. It would undoubtedly be useful, as proof of that support, if the Secretariat reassured her that it will mobilize all its components in support of international criminal justice. It would also be useful if future Council resolutions on Darfur reflected its concerns over the aerial bombings, the disarmament of militias, sexual violence and the necessity for the Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

Ms. King (Australia): I would like to thank Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda for her briefing, as well as for the continuing efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor in relation to Darfur. These briefings are an important opportunity for us to reaffirm that both the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Council have vital roles to play in ensuring that peace and justice are delivered to the people of the region. We cannot avoid Ms. Bensouda's central message to us that a dramatic shift is needed in the Council's approach to the level of support it provides to the International Criminal Court's effort to provide justice and accountability for the people of Darfur.

The Prosecutor's nineteenth report presents an extremely disturbing picture of the situation in Darfur, and the impact of the ongoing climate of impunity. It draws together what we in the Council have been trying to respond to this year alone in adopting resolutions 2138 (2014) and 2148 (2014), namely, the serious impact of the deteriorating security situation on the civilian population. We agree with the Prosecutor that there is every reason to be concerned about the trends in violence and the extent of its impact, including widespread sexual violence, which is causing great danger to civilians and to the peacekeepers and humanitarian workers seeking to help them.

This year alone, several hundred thousand people from Darfur — many of them women and children — have been displaced. That significant displacement reflects the fact that air strikes targeting civilians have reportedly continued despite clear demands from the Council that they cease. The air strikes have been coupled with the rise of the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group, which the Prosecutor reports has been involved in attacks against civilians, including attacking and burning villages, and which the Government of the Sudan has admitted is affiliated with the Sudanese Armed Forces. Humanitarian access continues to be deliberately restricted.

We are therefore grateful for the Office of the Prosecutor's efforts to continue to monitor the situation in Darfur, despite the significant challenges it faces in conducting meaningful investigations. Accurate information is obviously essential to future accountability processes and to ensure informed Council deliberations. That includes information from the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), of course, so we therefore support the Prosecutor's call for a thorough, independent and transparent inquiry into allegations that information about crimes committed against civilians and peacekeepers have been withheld.

We welcome the ICC's ongoing preparations for the trial of Abdallah Banda, and look forward to the Trial Chamber's decision on a revised start date. We call on the Sudanese authorities to cooperate with the Court so that the Office of the Prosecutor can make progress in other investigations and prosecutions. In particular, the Sudanese authorities must arrest and surrender President Al-Bashir, Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein, Ahmad Harun and Ali Kushayb, in line with the Sudan's obligations under resolution 1593 (2005).

It goes without saying that ICC States parties must also meet their obligations to cooperate with the Court. We are very disappointed that some States parties continue to invite President Al-Bashir to visit their countries and fail to meet their obligation to arrest and surrender him when he does. We welcome the Prosecutor's call for relevant States parties to be provided with the necessary support and assistance to ensure that effective arrests and surrenders can be made. And the Council should at least do the ICC the courtesy of responding to the Court's eight letters about the failure of some States to cooperate with the Court in relation to the Darfur referral.

The crimes reported by the Prosecutor are indicative of a pervasive culture of impunity in Darfur and a systemic failure by the Government of the Sudan to pursue accountability for attacks against its own

civilians, against humanitarian workers and against UNAMID peacekeepers. The Prosecutor is right to remind us that the Council's repeated demands to the Government of the Sudan to end impunity and bring justice and accountability to victims have gone deliberately unfulfilled. As Ms. Bensouda has told us this morning, the Government of the Sudan has failed to provide any meaningful measure of justice at the national level.

Those committing the crimes alleged in the Prosecutor's report must be held to account, and we know that the latest report presents only a fraction of what is actually taking place in Darfur. Where there is an allegation of an attack, such as that referenced in paragraph 44 of the Prosecutor's report — "in which militia forces, specifically from the Rapid Support Forces, reportedly gang-raped a 10-year-old girl" — it is unconscionable that the Government of the Sudan should fail to hold such perpetrators to account.

Despite the international community's efforts to date, the violence in Darfur is only getting worse. Perpetrators of Rome Statute crimes continue to avoid justice, emboldening others to commit similar crimes. Given the failure of the Sudanese authorities to take appropriate action on accountability, the ICC's efforts to ensure such accountability are critical. It was the Council that referred the situation to the ICC, and it is the Council that must shoulder its responsibility to support the Court's efforts to fulfil its mandate. There is no justification for further delay in the Council taking meaningful steps, therefore, to support the ICC's work in Darfur.

Mr. McKell (United Kingdom): We thank Ms. Bensouda for her report and her briefing today. In December last year, we expressed our concern at the lack of progress since she last addressed the Council (see S/PV.7080). It is extremely depressing that we must do so once again now.

First and foremost, that lack of progress is evidenced in the continued non-cooperation of the Government of the Sudan with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and by its non-implementation of its obligations under resolution 1593 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on the situation in Darfur. That is of serious concern, and we call once again on the Government of the Sudan to meet its obligations in that regard in full.

The Prosecutor's report refers to the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Darfur and the continuing perpetration of serious crimes against civilians. We are deeply concerned by the increased violence this year, including a resurgence of activities by rebel groups and the activities of the Government's Rapid Support Forces, as well as the continuing intercommunal violence.

Civilians continue to pay the highest price, with hundreds of thousands of people newly displaced this year. The reports of sexual and gender-based violence are deeply disturbing, both in terms of the high number and of the particular brutality of the violence. We are also concerned by alleged crimes against human rights defenders, civil society members and community leaders, as well as humanitarian workers and United Nations peacekeepers. The authorities' suspension of the activities of several humanitarian organizations will have an impact on civilians in dire need of assistance. We hope that the situation can be improved as quickly as possible.

We are deeply concerned by the active role that the Government's Rapid Support Forces are alleged to have played in the increased violence, including the looting and burning of villages. In addition, allegations of aerial bombardments by the Sudanese Armed Forces in rebel-held areas, harming civilian life and infrastructure, are extremely troubling. We also note with concern that the rebel forces have allegedly been involved in attacks on civilians. All parties must stop such actions immediately, take steps to ensure the protection of civilians in Darfur and grant unfettered and timely access to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and humanitarian workers.

We welcome the ICC's continued monitoring of actions that could constitute crimes under the Rome Statute, and reiterate our firm wish to work with partners to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes face justice. The ICC States parties must play their part, too, by fully implementing their obligations under the Rome Statute. We urge States to implement essential contact policies in support of the Court and the Office of the Prosecutor. We note with concern that the Prosecutor's report raises questions over the implementation of the United Nations policy on non-essential contact and urge the Secretariat to ensure full compliance with it.

We are also concerned by the allegations referred to in the Prosecutor's report regarding UNAMID's handling of information about crimes committed against civilians and peacekeepers. It is of pivotal

importance that the Mission keep the Council fully informed, and in detail, about developments on the ground. Only with that, can the Council do its work most effectively. We encourage the Secretariat to look carefully into the allegations made.

We welcomed the strategic review of UNAMID in February this year and look forward to its full implementation. We urge the Mission, the Secretariat and UNAMID's troop- and police-contributing countries to continue to work together towards that goal.

Finally, we must do more to follow up on the referral to the ICC. It is a poor reflection on the Council that we have not been able to respond in substance to the many letters received from the Court notifying us of instances of non-cooperation.

Mr. Gombo (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for her report on the situation in Darfur.

Chad is deeply concerned about the serious deterioration in security conditions in Darfur, owing to ongoing clashes between the Sudanese Government and the armed rebel groups and to worsening inter-community violence. The involvement of paramilitary units and tribal militias in the conflict are clearly a primary cause of the violence among civilians and the chief cause of displacement in the population. All violence, including the destruction of villages, rapes and abductions, and including attacks on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), must be halted. We condemn every act perpetrated on civilians by the Rapid Support Forces and other militias involved in the conflict.

As we have emphasized many times, there can be no military solution to this conflict. An open political settlement is essential to the restoration of peace in the region, which has been ravaged for more than a decade by an unprecedented civil war. On the humanitarian front, the escalation of the conflicts has resulted in a renewed deterioration of the situation. Since February, 400,000 people have fled the violence in numerous areas. This serious situation demands the attention of the entire international community and renders it vital that everything be done to stop the violence and protect innocent civilians. In that regard, we ask the Government of the Sudan to pursue the presumed perpetrators of these crimes and to help combat impunity.

Regarding the issues of insecurity and access that have hindered the ICC's investigations, as discussed in the Prosecutor's report, we call on the Sudanese Government to show proof of its flexibility and willingness to cooperate. Chad takes note of the Court's judgement in the case of Mr. Abdallah Banda and would like to express its support for the ICC in its efforts to bring justice to the victims and to end impunity.

It is clear that implementing the various Security Council resolutions on the crisis in Darfur has been difficult, due to the complexity of the crisis and to the fact that the concerns of the regional and subregional organizations involved in the quest for a way out of the crisis are not taken into account. We believe that it would be helpful to broaden the scope of our thinking on how to support the ICC in accomplishing its mission, by emphasizing the cooperation and involvement of all concerned through dialogue and by raising awareness. It would be counterproductive, in our view, to try to use the Security Council to exert systematic pressure in order to help the cases make progress in the Court. The issue of a solution to the follow-up of cases referred to the ICC could be usefully and judiciously discussed within the Conference of States Parties.

As we have always stated, concerning the issue of Chad's cooperation with the ICC, despite some difficulties linked to our status as a neighbour of the Sudan and our role as a facilitator in the Darfur crisis, Chad has always fully cooperated with the Court. It should be recalled that the ICC has conducted all its Darfur investigations from Chad, where it opened an office at the beginning of the crisis in the region. The situation in Darfur has had a huge impact on Chad, and it is no accident that almost 300,000 Sudanese refugees have ended up in the border area with Darfur since 2003. A lasting peace in Darfur would be a guarantee of stability and security for Chad and for all the countries bordering Darfur.

Furthermore, for the aforementioned reasons and at the international community's request, Chad has taken on the role of facilitator in settling the crisis in Darfur. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for us to play that part without being in contact with all the Sudanese parties. Chad nonetheless remains committed to its obligations under the Rome Statute and will do all in its power to meet them. However, considering the necessity of achieving security and stability, we ask for understanding on the part of the Court and the States parties for the non-compliance with certain procedures.

Lastly, in future Chad will take advantage of the consultation process outlined in the Rome Statute, enabling it to advise the Court in advance should it have difficulties in meeting its commitments.

Mr. Lord (United States of America): I would like to thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her briefing today. The United States appreciates her efforts to bring justice to the people of Darfur. We look forward to seeing further progress with the start of the trial of Abdallah Banda, who is alleged to be among those responsible for the deaths of 12 African Union peacekeepers.

The continued work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in investigating ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur is made more difficult by the alarming levels of violence and the persistent failure of the Government of the Sudan to abide by its obligations under resolution 1593 (2005) to cooperate fully with the Court. While the people of Darfur continue to await justice, the architects of the campaign of terror who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities in Darfur go free.

The consequences of this impunity are clear. Although the world first became aware of crimes in Darfur a decade ago, the Government continues to use apparently indiscriminate aerial bombardments with deadly consequences for civilians. Violence in Darfur continues to escalate as paramilitary Rapid Support Force soldiers kill, loot, burn and rape. This year, more than 322,000 Darfuris have been forced from their homes, worsening a humanitarian crisis that has been compounded by humanitarian groups' lack of access.

Unsurprisingly, the violence has spread beyond Darfur's borders. We are outraged by reports of ongoing indiscriminate attacks, as well as targeted attacks on civilians, hospitals and schools in the states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. These attacks have resulted in more than 100,000 new displacements since May, interrupting the planting season. Nor has the Government of the Sudan honoured its commitments to justice and accountability under the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. We have yet to see any credible independent investigation into violations of international humanitarian law or human rights, much less any cases for such acts prosecuted in the Special Courts for Darfur. Instead, we continue to see protracted assaults on civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers. If the Sudan is to enjoy a peaceful, stable and prosperous future, the Government cannot be indifferent to the lives of its people.

But it is not just the Government of the Sudan that has failed to live up to its commitments. We note the decisions issued by the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber with respect to non-cooperation in the Darfur situation. As the report by the Office of the Prosecutor notes, President Al-Bashir has traveled internationally on at least six occasions in as many months. We note that Africans have not always welcomed his visits. Last year, public protests and actions aimed at compelling President Al-Bashir's arrest made him leave one country before he was able to make an appearance, and activists in another country filed petitions demanding his apprehension and transfer to The Hague. The Security Council should take a cue from those groups and do more to follow up on the implementation of resolution 1593 (2005), since inaction only emboldens perpetrators in the Sudan and elsewhere.

In closing, the United States continues to believe that working to ensure justice and accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is not just a moral obligation, but is integral to ensuring a lasting and durable peace in the Sudan. We will continue to support Prosecutor Bensouda and ICC efforts to bring to justice those most responsible for serious crimes in Darfur.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Bensouda, for introducing the nineteenth report of her Office, pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005), and for her briefing to the Council today.

Guaranteeing and upholding the principles of the Rome Statute in delivering international criminal justice and fighting impunity requires full cooperation with the ICC so that it may fulfil its mandate, as highlighted in the Prosecutor's report and in her briefing today. Considering that the Security Council has referred the case of the Sudan to the ICC, the persistence of violations and the deterioration of the troubling humanitarian conditions in the Sudan, as stated in the report submitted by the Panel of Experts and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, we reiterate the need to ensure full coordination and cooperation with the Prosecutor of the ICC on the part of all parties and countries in order to address the deficiencies highlighted in the Prosecutor's report.

Jordan supports the recommendations presented in the report and in today's briefing. We must spare no effort in countering the suspicion that UNAMID

reports have been manipulated in an attempt to cover up certain crimes.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation.

I too should like to thank Ms. Bensouda for introducing her nineteenth report to the Security Council and for today's briefing. We are seriously concerned about the deterioration of the security situation in Darfur, given the intensification of insurgent fighting. Just in the first three months of this year, as a result of incursions of the Sudanese Liberation Army/Minni Minawi, 135,000 civilians were forcibly displaced. Also troubling is the escalation of skirmishes among different tribes as competition for resources has tightened. Against that backdrop, we note the robust efforts of the Sudanese Government to reconcile warring parties and prevent the spread of intercommunal violence.

The pressing humanitarian issues, including that of refugees and internally displaced persons, can be resolved by normalizing the military-political situation in the region. Furthermore, improving the situation will depend to a great extent on the timely implementation of the decision taken at last year's Doha conference to allocate $1 billion to the development needs of Darfur, and on the easing of the debt burden and the lifting of the economic sanctions against the Sudan levied by the United States in circumvention of the Security Council.

Of key importance is the further implementation of the political settlement on the basis of the 2011 Doha Agreement and the recent Government-launched national dialogue. We are convinced that the rebels in Darfur must ultimately join this parallel process without precondition. In that context, it is high time to reflect on applying sanctions against intractable insurgents, as provided for in the Security Council's resolutions. We could begin with the leaders responsible for the killing last year of leaders of the Justice and Equality Movement faction, who had earlier joined the Doha peace process.

Russia supports the efforts of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the situation in Darfur, pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005). In the general political context, the information confirmed in the ICC Prosecutor's report regarding unabated violence in Darfur is of serious concern to the Council. In that regard, we call on the Court to objectively assess criminal acts perpetrated by all sides in the recent clashes. The activities of the Court to fulfil its mandate to investigate the situation in Darfur cannot be disconnected from general efforts to normalize the situation in that troubled Sudanese province. A delicate balance must also be struck between the interests of reconciliation and justice.

We take note of the Prosecutor's observations regarding the cooperation of States with the International Criminal Court in the framework of the Darfur dossier. The situation in that regard demonstrates once again the importance of States' support to the successful functioning of the Court. When assessing the extent of a country's compliance with its relevant obligations, we should take into account that there can be varying degrees of compliance in each specific case.

In regard to the Security Council's appeals for so-called follow-up activities in referring cases to the ICC, our position has not changed. We believe that proposals should be considered on the basis of their practical suitability, taking into account the Council's purview, the ICC's mandate and the general international legal context. Neither the Rome Statute nor the agreements struck between the United Nations and the ICC stipulate automatic actions in response to such situations. Moreover, we see no added value to such measures at present. In particular, as is well known, serious concerns regarding the application of the Rome Statute to acting Heads of State have been raised by by the African Union. In our view, issues relating to the functions of the Rome Statue should not be resolved in the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on my list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7200

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 June 2014

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7200th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 17 June 2014, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On Tuesday, 17 June 2014, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 7200th meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

"The President invited Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Director of Asia and Middle East Division in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Ms. Nakamitsu.

"Members of the Council, Ms. Nakamitsu and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views."

14-55608 (E) 180614

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United Nations S/PV.7201

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 June 2014

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7201st (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 17 June 2014, at 4 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On Tuesday, 17 June 2014, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 7201st meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

"The President invited Mr. Albert Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Mr. Koenders.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Koenders and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views."

14-55612 (E) 180614

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United Nations S/PV.7202

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7202nd meeting
Wednesday, 18 June 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Iliichev	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Bliss
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Gálvez
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/403)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506. Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-43403 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/403)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Security Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/403, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address the Security Council following the publication of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/403). That publication occurred while Mali suffered violent clashes in the north that rocked not only the country but also the already fragile political process. This new outbreak of violence, concerning which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has already reported to the Council, was followed by a suicide attack against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on 11 June in Aguelhok, in which four of our soldiers were killed and six others were wounded, demonstrating yet again the precarious security situation in Mali. I take this opportunity to convey once again our sincere condolences to the families of those peacekeepers and to the Chadian Government and people, and to wish the wounded a speedy recovery.

(*spoke in English*)

Despite the efforts of the international community and Malian authorities over the past year, the tragic fighting in Kidal and its aftermath, as well as the general insecurity caused by the persisting presence of terrorist groups across northern Mali, highlight how much remains to be done to achieve lasting stability in that country. A successful political process has to be the cornerstone of that stability. All aspects of the stabilization of Mali, including the restoration of State authority, the re-establishment of security and the protection of civilians, remain contingent on the successful conclusion of peace talks between the Malian Government and northern armed groups in the framework of the Ouagadougou Agreement. The status quo cannot stand. Progress in the political process is urgent, and the time for peace talks is now.

After a promising start with the signature of the preliminary agreement one year ago today, the Government and the armed groups have made little progress towards real, substantive dialogue. I think it is fair to say that the lack of progress in the political process led to the sharp deterioration in the security situation in Kidal, where a military confrontation between Government forces and armed groups resulted in heavy casualties and the disorderly retreat of the Malian forces from Kidal and much of the north-east of the country. I condemn the atrocities committed in the course of these hostilities. Armed groups have now assumed effective military and, to an extent, administrative control over Kidal and other northern towns, in breach of the Ouagadougou Agreement.

The armed groups must understand that the presence of parallel or competing administration is incompatible with the spirit and the letter of the Ouagadougou Agreement and with the Council's goal of long-term peace and stability in Mali. These events — along with repeated attacks using improvised explosive devices and indirect fire incidents against MINUSMA, Malian forces and French Operation Serval — reflect a serious deterioration of the security situation since initial improvements in 2013, and have had a continued impact on the political, human rights and humanitarian situation.

A narrow window of opportunity has now opened. Thanks to the joint good offices of President Ould Abdel Aziz of Mauritania and of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Koenders, a ceasefire agreement

was signed on 23 May to end the hostilities in Kidal. The modalities for the implementation of that agreement were agreed in Gao on 13 June under the auspices of the MINUSMA Force Commander and the head of the Joint Technical Security Commission, which, as Council members know, is the ceasefire management body established by the Ouagadougou Agreement in June 2013. The ceasefire recommits the parties to the preliminary agreement and represents an important step in the right direction.

In parallel, the armed groups meeting under the auspices of Algeria in early June signaled their willingness to enter into negotiation with the Government to address the fundamental issues at the root of the conflict through dialogue. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and MINUSMA of course stand ready to continue playing a key role to encourage the launch of the peace talks as soon as possible. But ultimately, it is for the Malian parties to abide by their commitments and agree to the launch of the peace talks. Let me say again that they must do so at once.

Let me now turn to MINUSMA and its mandate, on which the Council will be deliberating in the course of the coming weeks. MINUSMA is now at an advanced stage of deployment and is set to reach, by the end of this month, 70 per cent of its envisaged civilian strength, 77 per cent of its military strength, and 83 per cent of its police strength. All of MINUSMA's authorized military and police capabilities have been generated, but the problem of the utility and armed helicopters remains. Their actual deployment continues to be delayed, however. About 90 per cent of the Mission's military assets are already based in the north.

My Department initiated a strategic review of MINUSMA earlier this year, which sought to test our original planning assumptions so as to inform the Council's debate on the way forward. As the Secretary-General outlines in his report of 9 June, we are formulating several main recommendations. They are, first, to reiterate the central importance of the political process and reframe and strengthen MINUSMA's political role; secondly, develop a shared vision for the way forward between the Mission and the Malian authorities; thirdly, maintain the troop and police ceilings while expanding MINUSMA's presence and mobility in the north as part of an integrated stabilization strategy; and fourthly, add or clarify tasks, such as support for cantonment, local elections and electoral reform, transitional justice and military justice, and counter-trafficking capacity-building, as well as enhanced support to the Malian military, subject to the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

Recent events have highlighted the importance of the central finding of the strategic review that the extension of State authority and stabilization cannot be uncoupled from the political process, which therefore remains the top priority. It also requires a closer partnership between the Government and MINUSMA based on a shared understanding of the Mission's mandate and the roles of each partner.

The Mission's concentration on the north will require us to address very real and very severe security and support constraints. A revised force laydown of MINUSMA and deployment plan for uniformed and civilian personnel will need to be developed. MINUSMA will need to be innovative in how it further decentralizes its presence, including through the use of tools such as long-range patrols.

In order to implement its mandate, MINUSMA must be in a position to identify, mitigate and deter threats against Malian civilians and United Nations personnel and assets. The Mission will have to make maximum use of its capabilities to project its presence beyond its bases of operation. In this regard, I take this opportunity to signal to the Council our intention to deploy unmanned aerial systems in order to enhance the situational awareness of MINUSMA and its ability to protect civilians and its own personnel. We are gratified by the arrival in theatre of combat helicopters that are capable of supporting long-range patrols and deterrent action over a wide area. I would nonetheless urge Member States that have pledged additional assets or that are providing bilateral support to enhance the capabilities of troop-contributing countries to deliver on these pledges as quickly as possible.

(*spoke in French*)

The sustained political commitment of the Security Council is essential to the successful stabilization of Mali. Moreover, the bilateral partners and international financial institutions need a consistent approach in order to achieve progress in the areas that are essential to stabilizing the country, such as governance and security sector reform. That will also be indispensable to the complete and successful implementation of the

mandate of MINUSMA. We are relying more than ever on the support and cooperation of all partners, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and all the friends of Mali, in order to achieve the objective shared by all, above all the people of Mali, of achieving a lasting, just and inclusive peace that will allow the country to focus on its top priority — development.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Diop (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, allow me to express the appreciation of my delegation at seeing your great country, the Russian Federation, preside over the work of the Security Council for the month of June.

I extend our warmest congratulations to the Republic of Korea for its outstanding leadership of the Council's work last month.

I welcome the convening of today's meeting devoted to the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). It is no coincidence that the presentation of the report under consideration (S/2014/403) is taking place today, on the first anniversary of the signing in Ouagadougou preliminary agreement on the the presidential elections and the inclusive peace talks in Mali. This seems to us to augur well, in spite of the abrupt deterioration in the security situation in the north of our country following attacks targeting Malian armed forces carrying out their mission to provide security for the visit by Mali's Prime Minister to Kidal on 17 May.

On that day, Malian rebel groups, supported by a mob of terrorists, decided to attack the Prime Minister's delegation and the Malian armed forces protecting him inside the Kidal governorate. Those mixed armed groups killed soldiers and coldly executed civilian prefects and sub-prefects, simply because they symbolized the attributes of Malian sovereignty in the Kidal region. They also abducted and kidnapped several civilians, before releasing them a few days later under pressure from MINUSMA. In carrying out those actions, they at least willfully violated the preliminary agreement and committed serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The Republic of Mali welcomes the support of the international community, particularly through the Security Council's statement of 20 May and the final communiqué of the Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held on 31 May, which condemned the 17 May attack against the Malian armed forces and reaffirmed the need to preserve national unity, territorial integrity and the secular and republican form of Government.

ECOWAS Heads of State and Government further affirmed that the security threats Mali faced in 2012 were still present. The comingling of those posing the threats has led to terrorists entering into pacts with other actors carrying out crimes in the Sahel. They also make pacts with the rebels. That was eviddent in the assault against Mali's armed forces on 17 May in Kidal. Preliminary evidence indicates that the murders committed against State officials in Kidal bore the hallmarks of terrorist groups and organizations.

Because "peace has victories no less renowned than war", we chose peace. In spite of the barbaric and unspeakable acts that we have suffered — acts condemned by the international community, including the Security Council, the African Union, ECOWAS and several bilateral and multilateral partners — the Government of Mali is more than ever driven by a constant concern for Malians to reconcile with Malians. To that end, Mali is putting all its resources behind creating the best conditions for national reconciliation, the restoration of social cohesion and the consolidation of national unity.

It is in that spirit that His Excellency President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita did not hesitate for a single moment, and ordered Malian armed forces to observe a ceasefire on 21 May, when the Secretary-General asked for it. That gesture of appeasement greatly facilitated the signing of the 23 May casefire agreement between the Government of Mali and the armed movements and groups, under the supervision of His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Chair of the African Union. We welcome here his strong leadership in the fight against terrorism and his desire to make the Sahel a region of peace, security, development and shared social well-being.

Since the signing of the ceasefire agreement, achieved thanks to the involvement of the United Nations and the African Union, the Government of

Mali has not stopped calling on groups and armed movements to show good faith and to engage in the path of dialogue.

To articulate his determination to peacefully resolve the issue concering the situation in the north of Mali, President Keita decided to appoint former Prime Minister Modibo Keïta as his High Representative for the Inter-Malian Inclusive Dialogue. His particular mandate is to establish and maintain a climate of trust among all parties involved in the dialogue, to facilitate exchanges and to contribute to a rapprochement of views in the interests of the people of Mali. He is authorized to take any initiative conducive to the conclusion of a final comprehensive peace agreement.

Also as part of his mandate, the High Representative has already made contacts in Ouagadougou and Nouakchott with all groups and armed belligerent groups arrayed against the Government of Mali, so as to signal the resolute determinaiton of the President and the Government to prioritize dialogue on weapons and to spare no effort to create the best conditions for the conclusion of a final comprehensive peace agreement on the crisis in north of Mali.

The High Representative has also urged the armed groups and movements to reiterate their commitment to the Ouagadougou preliminary agreement, which they agreed to do. He is currently continuing the process of making contacts with the Government of Mali and the other national, regional and international actors involved in the peace process. And he is working closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and with other special envoys of regional organizations.

With regard to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, esablished in March 2013 by the President of the Transition in accordance with article 21 of the Ouagadougou agreement, the National Assembly adopted the law on its establishment last March. While its members are yet to be appointed, the Minister of National Reconciliation is actively working on that.

It goes without saying that those two mechanisms — the High Representative and the Commission — are complementary and mutually reinforcing. The former is working on the conclusion of a final comprehensive peace agreement; the latter is working on reconciling hearts and minds, which of course is a long-term undertaking.

Mali is willing to consider with its friends, partners and many supporters any mechanism for emerging from the crisis effectively and efficiently, in support of its efforts. It is in that context that Algeria, to which we pay tribute, undertook, at the request of the President of Mali, to carry out exploratory consultations among all armed groups and movements in the north to develop a common platform to serve as a basic document, among other things, to hold inclusive inter-Malian talks, which are slated for the coming days. The Government of Mali has reiterated its confidence in Algeria and asked it to continue its efforts so that the talks can lead to a final comprehensive agreement as soon as possible.

Part of that undertaking included the holding, at Algiers on 16 June, of the third coordination meeting for the Inter-Malian Inclusive Dialogue process, with the participation of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Chad, the Niger and Burkina Faso, a well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General — our friend Albert Koenders, who is here and whom I commend for his active participation and outstanding contribution to the meeting — and former Burundian President Pierre Buyoya, High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel, who is seated next to Mr. Koenders.

Participants at the meeting welcomed the progress made under the auspices of Algeria in creating conditions conducive to Inter-Malian Inclusive Dialogue and noted the broad convergence of views on the guidelines of the agreed approach. They also noted that the conclusions reached by the six armed groups and movements in northern Mali — on 9 and 14 June, as well as those adopted by the fourth meeting of the Algeria-Mali strategic committee on15 June at Algiers — offer a promising opportunity to be exploited without delay in order to engage the stakeholders on the path of the Inter-Malian Inclusive Dialogue.

They also stressed the importance and urgency of conducting the initial phase of dialogue foreseen at Algiers, in line with the time line and the modalities agreed. Finally, participants expressed their readiness to provide support and assistance to these efforts in line with the objectives that the international community set itself in resolution 2100 (2013), the relevant decisions of the African Union and ECOWAS and the provisions of the Ouagadougou agreement aimed at preserving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali and consolidating national unity.

In that context, it was agreed with Algeria that certain key principles would be respected in the process. The first principle is that of inclusivity. All partners with the necessary influence and capacities must contribute to or be involved in the process. The second principle is that of transparency. It is agreed that, to the extent possible, the elements up for discussion must be shared with all the partners with an interest in the process. The third principle is the need for coordination and consistency among all the intitiatives taken with respect to Mali, and to ensure that these initiatives are addressed as a whole and that a mechanism is found to align the efforts launched in Algiers with the need for enhanced input on the part of the parners, including the United Nations, which we hope will maintain its central role in the process.

The Government of the Republic of Mali's agrees with the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS that, in order to help our country to regain its sovereignty over its entire national territory, including Kidal, the Security Council should strengthen the mandate of MINUSMA and give it the means and personnel to properly carry out its mission of guaranteeing the implementation of the Ouagadougou agreement of 18 June 2013. In that regard, we regret that, a year after the establishment of the Mission and in an especially volatile context, it does not yet have the troops or resources necessary to duly fulfil its mandate.

I should now like to share the expectations of the Government of the Republic of Mali in the context of the renewal of the mandate of MINUSMA.

With respect to the stabilization of the northern regions of Mali, my country would like to see the future MINUSMA mandate contain a clear provision on the Mission's rapid deployment beyond the major northern population centres, particularly around the villages and nomadic lands. This proposal has the advantage of taking into account the lifestyle of nomads from the north who prefer to live outside of large cities. It would fill the security vacuum in the gray or lawless areas where people are most vulnerable to infiltration by armed groups that have not signed the the Ouagadougou agreement and may be affiliated to the terrorist networks Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest or Ansar Dine, and other drug-trafficking groups, as was the case in 2012.

My delegation also wishes to draw the Council's attention to the need to authorize the conduct of joint Malian armed forces/MINUSMA operations to optimally restrict the freedom of movement of armed groups that are not signatories of the Ouagadougou agreement and may be associated with terrorists and drug traffickers. Similarly, Mali seeks MINUSMA support in order to accelerate the process of cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), so as to isolate and disarm non-signatory armed groups affiliated to networks that are wiping out the security gains made in northern Mali by Operation Serval and the Malian and Chadian armed forces.

In the same vein, Mali believes that it would be advisable to include the following elements in the Council's future resolution on MINUSMA: the solid support of MINUSMA for the strict implementation of the ceasefire in all its components, for the return to the positions held before 17 May, for the revitalization and reactivation of the follow-up mechanisms of the Ouagadougou agreement, and for the relaunch of the peace talks; the strong support of MINUSMA for the cantonment and DDR of armed groups that have signed the Ouagadougou agreement; MINUSMA support for the Malian State in the redeployment of the administration and the reconstruction of the northern regions; the substantial reduction of the MINUSMA footprint in the south to the benefit of the regions of the north, where there is a real and pressing need for stabilization and reconstruction; the support of MINUSMA and the international community for the coming local and regional elections; the establishment of the international commission of inquiry provided for in the ceasefire agreement of 23 May; and the establishment, in the resolution on MINUSMA, of a benchmark for monitoring the implementation of the new mandate.

On behalf of the grateful people and Government of the Republic of Mali, I pay reverent homage to the memory of all the brave soldiers, Malian civilians and friends of Mali who have lost their lives in the fight against obscurantism, terrorism and violent extremism in Mali. Furthermore, on behalf of the people, Government and President of Mali, Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, I express our deep gratitude to the French and Chadian authories, the United Nations, ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the countries that contribute troops to MINUSMA. We commend

MINUSMA, its personnel and in particular Special Representative Mr. Albert Gerald Koenders, as well as all Mali's bilateral and multilateral partners, for their unwavering support at the height of the crisis and the terrorist occupation we have suffered for the past year. We convey our deep gratitude to them all.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7203

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7203rd meeting
Thursday, 19 June 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin/Mr. Iliichev	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Gálvez
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress towards the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (S/2014/397)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress towards the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (S/2014/397)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/397, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the progress towards the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

I now give the floor to Ms. Sellassie.

Ms. Sellassie (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to brief the Security Council on the progress towards the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. As the Council knows, I assumed my functions very recently, and I would like to take this opportunity to share my first impressions and some views on the future direction of the United Nations efforts in the Sahel region.

Since the endorsement of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel by the Council last year, the United Nations system in the region has jointly initiated a number of regional activities in the areas of governance, security and resilience, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/397).

In the area of governance, we have given priority to activities that promote political inclusion and seek to build consensus among the population on the basis of national and regional priorities. We have also underscored capacity-building activities for the improved delivery of essential services. While continuing to focus on those important priorities, we need to do more to reach the people of the Sahel and to place them at the centre of efforts to address the challenges of governance.

In the area of security, we have initiated activities that seek to promote the common management of the borders and to prevent the spread of violent ideology through confidence-building and capacity-building measures. Those activities need to be scaled up, while more attention and resources must be paid to fighting youth unemployment.

In the area of resilience, we will continue to link humanitarian interventions and development activities, including by promoting legitimate cross-border economic activity.

(*spoke in English*)

In the short time that I have been in office, I have been struck by the deterioration of the political and security situation in the region, notably in Libya, the enduring political and security challenges in Mali, and the persistent terrorist attacks throughout the region, in particular those carried out by Boko Haram in Nigeria, all of which continue to have negative consequences on civilians and local economies. The humanitarian situation remains extremely fragile in 2014. At least 20 million people remain at risk of food insecurity and nearly 5 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition. Meanwhile, the high levels of youth unemployment in the Sahel increase the appeal of violent ideology.

As the Council is aware, the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy requires both the sustained political will of the Governments of the countries of the Sahel and, more broadly, a profound political, economic and social transformation in the region. One of the key lessons that we learned from the crisis in Mali is that democratization processes, which translate into internationally sanctioned elections and efforts towards decentralization, need to be complemented by efforts to strengthen State institutions and to better integrate and manage diverse societies. At every level, the quality of governance is crucial to creating an environment that effectively reduces the risk of identity-based conflict, the religious radicalization of society, the youth in particular, and their recruitment to terrorist groups or any kind of criminal network.

The formulation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel has raised very high expectations among the people of the region, requiring tangible benefits for the populations as quickly as possible. That is why, in implementing the integrated strategy, the United Nations system will prioritise the inclusion of

civil society, tribal and religious leaders, and research institutions.

The dramatic surge in the terrorist acts of Boko Haram in northern and central Nigeria since 2013 is now also threatening Cameroon, the Niger and Chad. Moreover, the conflict and state collapse in the Central African Republic have led to higher instability in Central Africa and thereby increased the risk of new connections between terrorist groups based in the Sahara/Sahel region, Nigeria, the Horn and East Africa. The reality on the ground is that North, West and Central Africa form a contiguous geopolitical region where short-term as well as mid- and long-term multidimensional responses to various threats to peace and security need to be implemented collectively.

That is why efforts to address security challenges in the Sahel within the framework of the United Nations strategy cannot ignore the interactions between core Sahel countries and North Africa or between core Sahel and other countries of West and Central Africa. Responding to the threats of insecurity in the Sahel in a sustainable manner requires a well-coordinated approach encompassing North, West and Central African countries and a flexible, issue-based, geographical definition of the borders of the Sahel region. The successful implementation of the strategy therefore requires that the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for West Africa and for Central Africa and the Special Envoy for the Sahel work closely together in diplomatic and political action, taking into account also United Nations political initiatives in North African countries, especially Libya.

In November 2013, the Ministers of the region established a coordination platform for the Sahel, entrusted with the overall coordination of the initiatives on the Sahel with a rotating chairmanship, currently held by Mali. The broad membership of the platform, from Cape Verde to the Sudan and from Cameroun to Tunisia, reflects the adoption of a flexible geographical definition of the region, which is necessary for the successful implementation of the strategy. It can also generate the much needed interregional cooperation I mentioned earlier, and improve relations among the countries concerned, beyond the boundaries of the individual economic communities.

Since its establishment, the members of the platform have met twice, endorsing the road map of the current chairmanship and agreeing to take concrete steps to improve coordination. Despite these efforts, the platform has faced challenges in promoting regional cooperation in the Sahel, largely due to the emergence of competing interventions and strategies that may delay progress towards long-term stability and development in the region.

Moving forward, it is important to support the rotating chairmanship in order to strengthen coordination and cooperation among all the concerned regional and international actors. This cannot be achieved by simply exchanging information. There is a need to leverage the comparative strengths of national Governments, subregional economic communities, the African Union and other concerned multilateral organizations and financial institutions in order to harmonize the multiple strategies.

I am fully committed to supporting the effective functioning of the platform. In this task, I have joined hands with the African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, Mr. Pierre Buyoya. Within the framework of our respective mandates, he and I are co-chairing the technical secretariat, which is tasked to support the work and implement the decisions of the coordination platform, under the guidance of the rotating chairmanship.

Although the United Nations has significantly improved internal coordination and promoted a more coherent response, more needs to be done if the coordinated support of the international community is to effectively respond to the persisting challenges in the Sahel region. When the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the World Bank Group, the President of the African Development Bank and the European Commissioner for Development visited the region in November last year, they committed to breaking down institutional barriers and ensuring better targeted and coordinated support based on complementary areas of strength. I intend to honour that commitment as a matter of priority. If the international community does not improve coordination, then the limited resources that have been made available so far will not have the desired impact. Acting fast and in a coordinated manner is necessary to overcome the current pattern of recurrent crises and move towards a future of stability and development in the region.

My predecessor, Mr. Romano Prodi, oversaw the development of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Said

Djinnit, has helped set up coordination mechanisms within the United Nations system for the effective implementation of the strategy. I will build on these important efforts, while continuing to consult with all concerned Member States and civil society, as well as regional and international partners for the successful implementation of the integrated strategy for the Sahel.

(*spoke in French*)

The countries of the region need assistance in laying the foundations of stability and sustainable development. Strengthening cooperation among national, regional and international partners is a precondition for the delivery of the needed assistance. The United Nations priority during the coming year will be to amplify joint action by harmonizing and aligning political, security, development and humanitarian efforts throughout the region. However, if we are to succeed, we will need the support and involvement of the Security Council in promoting joint action on the part of all actors working for the well-being of the peoples of the Sahel and, above all, the commitment and political will of the Governments of the countries of the region to undertake without further delay the structural reforms necessary to the prosperity of the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Sellassie for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Russian Federation for having organized this debate on the Sahel. I congratulate Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie on her nomination as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and thank her for her briefing. I also pay tribute to the former Special Envoy, Mr. Romano Prodi, for his tireless efforts, and commend the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa.

I welcome the fact that the Sahel region, which is one of the poorest in the world, has attracted the Security Council's attention. The region continues to face security, humanitarian, governance and development problems, as well as the damaging impact of drought and desertification. The presence of armed groups — including separatist, terrorist and criminal groups — and the proliferation of weapons and youth unemployment further complicate the already precarious situation.

Chad welcomes the efforts of regional and international organizations to find solutions to the region's problems. We especially appreciate the holding, in New York on 26 September 2013, of a high-level meeting on the situation in the region, as well as the high-level visit from 5 to 7 November 2013 to Mali, the Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad carried out by the Secretary-General along with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, the President of the African Development Bank (ADB), the Commissioner of the European Union responsible for development and representatives of the World Bank. We also welcome the announcement of new investments in the region — totalling $6.75 billion from the European Union and $1.05 billion from the World Bank — to benefit the five countries of the region. I should like to make some observations on the three pillars of the strategy, namely, governance, security and resilience.

With regard to governance, I welcome the commendable initiatives by the United Nations system and its partners, including the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, UNESCO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, aimed at resolving the governance problems that exist in several of the countries of the region. Among other things, those efforts touch on the question of women, promoting social cohesion, preventing conflict, supporting Governments in order to improve access to basic services, creating jobs and income-generating activities, supporting efforts to assess the risks of vulnerability, birth registration, strengthening teaching, vocational and professional education facilities, and assistance to defence and human rights institutions, among other things.

With regard to security, the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, followed by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), contributed greatly to stabilizing that country. Nevertheless, the restoration of the territorial integrity of the country continues to be a major challenge. The resumption of clashes between Malian forces and armed groups in Kidal on 19 May has seriously undermined a country that is already quite fragile. We wish to commend the joint efforts by the Chair of the African Union and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA that led to the conclusion of a ceasefire agreement on 23 May. We would also like to welcome the Algiers talks among

the armed groups, which have made it possible to establish a platform for an inclusive dialogue with the Government.

However, the ever-increasing terrorist attacks, isolated incidents and the use of improvised explosive devices against both Malian and international forces are unacceptable and we resolutely condemn them. Last week's attack in Aguelhoc, in which four of Chad's soldiers serving in MINUSMA were killed and others were injured, serves to remind us that the terrorist threat has not been stemmed.

There are also enormous risks in Libya that the democratic transition could be reversed, in spite of the election of the Constituent Assembly last April and the progress made in the area of transitional justice. The country today is favoured territory for lawlessness and all sorts of criminal and terrorist activity.

The terrorist acts and kidnappings of children by Boko Haram in Nigeria are a further cause for concern. That group has access to sophisticated weapons and poses a growing threat to the region of Lake Chad and Central African through its exploitation of the porousness of the borders and the situation of unemployment and ignorance among young people.

As the report of the Secretary-General points out (S/2014/397), terrorist attacks in the Maghreb and the Sahel increased by 60 per cent in 2013 over the previous year, reaching a total of 230 incidents. This is worrying when it comes to survival of both people and public institutions. The United Nations, which has been working in the region since July 2013, should continue and step up its efforts. I wish to welcome the regional projects carried out by the Organization to foster security, in particular the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force of the Department of Political Affairs.

Security is at the heart of development. The goal should be to wage a relentless war against jihadists, terrorists, criminals and traffickers. Particular emphasis must be placed on strengthening cooperation, especially with the Maghreb, by involving police, customs and education services, creating a regional and subregional database and stepping up information exchange.

Moreover, young people must be made aware of the true teachings of religion, so as to prevent radicalization and involvement in the ranks of terrorist and criminal groups. We must also provide solutions to the economic problems of youth. We must highlight to young people the crucial role of traditional and religious leaders in preventing and resolving conflict.

Security in and of itself is not enough; there must be a major campaign with regard to resilience, given the Sahel's acute development problems and its grave humanitarian difficulties. In spite of the efforts made by the countries of the region, at least 20 million people face the risk of food insecurity, with 4.1 million already in a critical stated, almost 5 million children threatened by acute malnutrition and more than 1.5 million refugees and displaced persons as a result of epidemics and natural disasters. I welcome the regional initiatives by all the agencies of the United Nations system aimed at strengthening the people's resiliency.

We ask that particular attention be focused on women by way of access to productive elements such as land, financing and credit, technology and so forth. Young people should also receive support in the areas of education and access to decent employment.

We are embittered at seeing the degradation of the environment as a result of climate change. We call for adaptation and mitigation measures, in particular through adaptation and the management of watersheds, including those in Chad and the Niger River, as well as by the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative.

We must also encourage investment in herding communities and create avenues for development that can serve to settle people and improve their living conditions. In that regard, we call for support for national development programmes and regional initiatives, in particular those developed by the African Union and other institutions in the Sahel.

It is also crucial that we resolve the energy crisis in the Sahel by emphasizing investments and by exploiting the limitless potential of renewable energy, including solar, wind, geothermal and biomass.

All of that will require considerable financial resources, which should be provided through flexible disbursement procedures, so as to effectively support efforts in the Sahel. In that regard, we hope that the Sahel Action Fund being put in place at the ADB will bring substantial added value for the implementation of the projects identified.

We also count on the support of the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and all other bilateral and multilateral partners to provide ongoing financial and technical support to the countries of the region, especially the five countries singled out in the Sahel strategy. We commend the putting in place of a coordination mechanism for the strategy. We welcome the fact that the ministerial coordination platform for the Sahel, currently led by Mali, provides a framework to consider the major problems in the region and to arrive at a common understanding on the initiatives and follow up the progress achieved.

We remain optimistic that close collaboration between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the High Representative of the African Union, as co-chairs of the technical secretariat for the coordination platform, will be strengthened with a view to coordinating and harmonizing initiatives.

We also welcome the development of an implementation plan for the strategy covering the period 2014 to 2016. We take note of the move of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General from Rome to Dakar on 1 January.

Chad also welcomes the drafting of various initiatives aimed at resolving the manifold and complex problems affecting the Sahel, including the African Union strategy for the Sahel, the European Union strategy for security and development in the Sahel, the joint Sahel programme of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel and the IDB, the regional programme for the Sahel being developed by the World Bank, which is focused on resilience and the economic perspective, the Sahel strategy of the Economic Community of West African States and other relevant initiatives.

We hope that the strategy, given its evolving nature, will take on the main priorities of development as set forth in relevant national and regional development programmes. In that context, in order to better contribute to meeting the objectives set, Chad has already appointed a coordinator for each of the three objectives of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. In that regard, we ask that a formal working group with the Permanent Missions in New York of the countries of the Sahel region to ensure follow-up in the development and implementation of initiatives.

In conclusion, we hope that pursuant resolution 68/247, section VI, para. 13, the title of the current Special Envoy be raised to the Deputy Secretary-General level to enhance the scope of the Office's action to match the level of the challenges to be met in the vast region of the Sahel.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel for her statement and wish to express to her, on behalf of France, our full support in carrying out her new mandate.

The crisis in Mali, which has marshalled a large part of our energy for more than a year, symbolizes to the extreme the fragility of the Sahel. What is the added value of the United Nations to help the Sahel countries to face those challenges? The United Nations strategy should respond by striving to attain three objectives.

First, the strategy must define a common transnational approach to all agencies. The approach should be transnational because the United Nations response to the problems of the Sahel with regard to humanitarian, security and development issues has long been segmented according to States. That does not make sense to respond to problems that are transnational in nature, be they issues of security or climate or related to the situation of nomadic peoples of the Sahel. Next, a common approach by all United Nations agencies is also essential in all areas. Terrorism feeds on governance and development problems. Conversely, security issues have a negative impact on economic growth of the States of the Sahel. Without security there is no development and without development there is also no security.

I commend the United Nations on those two aspects for the work it has accomplished in the last two years under the coordination of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. His work has provided a good foundation for a regional and integrated approach by the United Nations.

Secondly, the United Nations should help all stakeholders to coordinate their efforts for the Sahel. A good example in that regard is the Malian crisis. The coordination among all international actors is not obvious. Yet it is essential if the parameters of a lasting peace in Mali are to be defined. The United Nations and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) have a key role to play in that process, as the Security Council has pointed out.

Across the Sahel, many initiatives and forums bring together the countries of the region in different

configurations — the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, "countries of the field" and the Group of Five for the Sahel, among others. In addition, international partners have developed their own approach to the Sahel; for example, the European Union has its own strategy for the Sahel, as do the African Union, ECOWAS, and the World Bank, with its Sahel initiative. We must ensure that those multiple initiatives are coordinated in an efficient manner. In that context, the United Nations and the Special Envoy can play a role of good offices to bring together the regional and international efforts in the Sahel.

In that context, the coordination platform for the integrated strategy in the Sahel, implemented on the occasion of the visit of the Secretary-General to the Sahel in November 2013, is a unique framework. It is being chaired by Mali for two years, and the United Nations and the African Union provide the secretariat. The platform is the only forum that brings together all the countries of West Africa and the Maghreb, as well as the international and regional organizations concerned.

Thirdly and most important, the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel must lead to concrete projects in all areas. In the area of governance, the next year will be marked by a large number of elections in the Sahel and West Africa, which are all tests for the robustness of these States. The task of the United Nations is to assist States wanting such assistance in organizing the deadlines in a transparent and credible manner.

In the area of security, the Secretary-General recalls that the terrorist attacks in the Maghreb and Sahel grew by 60 per cent in 2013 compared to 2012, which includes 230 incidents throughout the region. As members of the Council know, France is very involved in helping the countries of the region. We intervened directly at the request of the Malian authorities and in support of our African partners. The Elysée Summit for Peace and Security in Africa in December 2013 provided an opportunity for African countries to intensify their cooperation in order to strengthen their security capabilities and their ability to respond to crises. For its part, the United Nations can contribute to that effort.

In the humanitarian and development areas, extreme poverty is a root cause of problems in the Sahel. That is compounded by a fast-growing population, which weighs on the development of those countries. In 2014, the number of people suffering from food insecurity in the region is estimated to be over 20 million. Five million children are threatened by a risk of serious malnutrition. The development of desert areas should be a major focus of our efforts, in support of pastoralism and the development of infrastructure to open up those spaces. We welcome the commitment of international partners in that area.

The decision of Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in February in Rome to launch a consolidated appeal for the Sahel for $2 billion over three years is innovative. It is the first time that a multiannual approach has been adopted. It adds to the major commitments of the World Bank and the European Union. France, the largest bilateral donor in the region, has also decided to increase its commitment to €900 million for the period 2014 to 2015.

In conclusion, I would like to call for the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel not to be just another theoretical document, disconnected from reality. The problems plaguing the Sahel are too serious for us to let that happen. The United Nations strategy must be genuinely at the service of the States and peoples of the Sahel and should lead to practical solutions.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's briefing on the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. I congratulate Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie on her recent appointment as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and thank her for her briefing. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the former Special Envoy, Mr. Romano Prodi, for his work and contribution in the launching and initial implementation of the strategy for the Sahel.

Since the last briefing on the strategy, the regional security and humanitarian landscape have continued to be of concern. Porous borders and weak State structures throughout the region, compounded by specific challenges in Libya and Mali, and the increasing activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria, especially along the borders with Chad and Cameroon, provide an enabling environment for increased illicit activities and potential instability in the subregion. Although several initiatives and meetings have taken place, the pace of implementation of concrete projects aimed at addressing the root causes of conflicts and creating resilience in the populations of the region needs to be accelerated. In the same vein, we would like to

emphasize the importance of ownership, political will and trust among Governments of the region, which are critical for the success of those initiatives. In that regard, the development of the 2014-2016 implementation plan of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel is encouraging. Allow me to make a few comments on some of the pillars of that strategy.

On governance, we welcome activities that were undertaken to address challenges related to women's participation in the political process, the promotion of social cohesion and job creation and income-generating activities, with a focus on youth. In addition, we would like to stress that strengthening the capacity of the countries of the region to ensure the effectiveness of the State authority will enable regional States to protect populations and borders. In that regard, there is a need to associate and coordinate with different regional actors, such as the Economic Community of West African States, Maghreb countries, the African Union (AU) and United Nations agencies.

On resilience and the humanitarian situation, we are pleased to note the development of the strategic response plan for 2014-2016. The region is facing chronic humanitarian needs, with more than 20 million people in need, including refugees and internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, the response to those needs has been below expectations. We call on partners, especially the financial partners, such as the European Union, World Bank and the African Development Bank, to honour their pledges by supporting enabling projects for the people of the region. It is also important that countries of the Sahel region, as well as the whole African continent, improve the management of natural resources in order to move towards self-resilience and long-term sovereignty.

On security, the scourge of terrorism and extremism has not spared the Sahel region, with unprecedented security and humanitarian consequences. There is a need for a regional response to a regional threat, as demonstrated by the increased terrorism in the region and in Libya and northern Mali. Terrorism is increasingly becoming interconnected throughout Africa — from Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Ansar Dine in Mali, and Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya to Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and from the Maghreb to East Africa and the Horn through West Africa, with links to Syria, Yemen and other parts of the world. This is a worrying situation, threatening the African and world stability. We need now to have proactive policies and mechanisms and concrete measures to prevent the proliferation of those negative groups. Those measures can succeed only if the United Nations works hand in hand with the regional and subregional organizations to enhance and sustain innovative mechanisms aimed at foreseeing and preventing terrorist activities instead of managing their deadly consequences.

Rwanda would like to stress that security should be one of the key priorities of the Sahel strategy, with a focus on enhancing cross-border cooperation and building capacity for better border control and management. At the same time, we would like to encourage regional initiatives to enhance security cooperation in the Sahel in order to combat terrorism, transnational crime, and arms and drug trafficking more effectively. In that regard, Rwanda welcomes the holding of the meeting organized by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in Nouakchott in May 2014.

In conclusion, Rwanda commends the important work done by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys in coordinating initiatives with the African Union, represented by President Pierre Buyoya, AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel; the World Bank; the African Development Bank and other interlocutors in the region, with a view to giving momentum to the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. We pledge our continued support for those activities and call on Governments of the region to fully utilize the demonstrated international will to support the Sahel region.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): I congratulate Ms. Hiroute Sellassie on her appointment as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel. I also thank her for her briefings on the progress in the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

The Sahel region, which stretches across an extensive transitional area of Africa, has faced many complex and interconnected challenges. The region remains vulnerable and susceptible to food insecurity, terrorism and drug and arms trafficking, among others. In particular, the security challenges in Libya, the recent violent clashes in northern Mali and terrorist attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria have had a negative impact on the civilian and local economies of the Sahel region.

As such, the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which encompasses the three sectors of governance, security and resilience, serves as an invaluable framework to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing such multifaceted challenges. We believe that the full and timely implementation of the strategy is of utmost importance. In that vein, I would like to touch upon three points regarding the implementation of the strategy.

First, it is important to strengthen the long-term capacity of the Governments in the Sahel region through the United Nations strategy. Capacity-building can also foster the political will and national ownership of the Governments concerned. In particular, given the seriousness of the security challenges surrounding the porous borders of the Sahel region, capacity-building for border control, counter-terrorism, combating transnational organized crime, and preventing violent extremism needs to be urgently implemented.

Another element required is ensuring overall coherence and complementarity. Taking into account the various regional initiatives for the Sahel, it is imperative to have an effective coordination and coherence mechanism. The regional organizations, based on their comparative advantages, should seek to create synergies with other initiatives in order to maximize the effectiveness of assistance and avoid the duplication of effort. In that regard, we note that the second meeting of the ministerial coordination platform on strategies for the Sahel, which was held in Bamako on 16 May, we called for the continued coordination and priority setting through such mechanisms.

Finally, more focus should be placed on women and young people, who are the potential driving force for the development of the Sahel region. Women play a key role in food production in the Sahel and often show resilience to natural and economic shocks. Moreover, unemployed young people are taken advantage of by terrorist and extremist groups under circumstances of poverty and food insecurity. Ensuring their participation in the political process and empowering them through assistance and support would greatly contribute to the promotion of governance, security and resilience in the Sahel region.

It is essential that the international community maintain its engagement and commitment to the Sahel. The Republic of Korea is committed to supporting those efforts to promote peace, stability and development in the region.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Like others, we welcome Ms. Guebre Sellassie to her first Council briefing as Special Envoy.

Today's meeting is important in maintaining the spotlight on the ongoing humanitarian, governance and security challenges in the Sahel region and on the United Nations response. As we have been warned time and again, we cannot forget the Sahel or we will face more crises like the one experienced in Mali.

Recent developments are very worrying. They include clashes between the Government and armed groups in northern Mali, the deteriorating security situation in Libya, and the increasing impact of Boko Haram. Civilians across the region face the persistent threat of violence and food insecurity. Terrorism and organized crime are harming legitimate economic opportunities, undermining Government capabilities and creating political instability. That in turn is allowing armed groups to expand their influence. There are new flows of refugees and internally displaced people.

As we know, just as the problems transcend borders, so too must their solutions. The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel provides a truly cross-regional platform to address those challenges. The focus must now be on the implementation of all three pillars of the strategy — governance, security and resilience — prioritizing the highest impact activities. I will focus on three issues.

First, we must look at coordination. The Sahel strategy is a tool for coordination, both within the United Nations and more broadly, internationally. It should assist in promoting coherence of the actions of regional and international actors so that time and resources are not wasted. We are encouraged by the growing leadership from the region, including through the ministerial coordination platform, which met in Bamako in May. We welcome United Nations and African Union support for the platform. We also note the establishment of the Group of Five for the Sahel to facilitate coordination among Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. Complementarity and the synchronization of those initiatives will obviously be vital.

Secondly, we must deal with terrorism. Africa, as we know, has become a central theatre in the fight against terrorism. The evolving nature of the Al-Qaida network poses particular threats to the Sahel region, where terrorist attacks increased last year by an

alarming 60 per cent — the highest level in the past 12 years. Al-Qaida affiliates in the Sahel exploit local conflicts. Their leadership is younger, more prone to brutal violence and less responsive to community leaders, and they are more independently resourced, raising money through the taking of territory, organized crime and kidnapping for ransom.

Tackling the terrorist threat requires measured security and law enforcement approaches coupled with community-based action to counter violent extremism. Regional Governments need to diminish the appeal of terrorism to vulnerable populations, especially youth, who are at particular risk of radicalization and who form the largest demographic constituency in the region.

Countering violent extremism is complex, but it is more relevant than ever in preventing terrorism and conflict. We welcome the Secretary-General's increased focus on the issue and the priority the Regional Working Group on Security has given it. That policy leadership now needs to be followed by concrete activities. Strengthening engagement between the Department of Political Affairs, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate will continue to be important, and we urge the United Nations to leverage the full range of development and security entities to build community resilience against terrorism.

The Council has a specific instrument to tackle the Al-Qaida threat — namely, the Al-Qaida sanctions regime. However, its effectiveness depends upon the ability of affected States to use the regime as part of their national and regional counter-terrorism strategies. We need to do more to empower and encourage the countries of the Sahel to do so. As Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, we have worked to improve collaboration with regional authorities to identify individuals and entities who should be targeted by the regime.

Finally, on resilience, which is the third pillar of the strategy, over 20 million people in the Sahel — a number equal to the population of Australia — are threatened by food insecurity, including 5 million children facing acute malnutrition. An entire generation is at risk. As the number of people confronting food insecurity, weather extremes, instability and violence grows, the need for a comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing those threats is self-evident. We welcome the efforts to date of the Regional Working Group on Resilience towards promoting systemic change on resilience.

We are pleased that the humanitarian community's three-year strategic response plan for the Sahel is well aligned with the Regional Working Group's efforts. We encourage the international community to continue support in line with that strategic approach. Australia's humanitarian assistance to the Sahel region, which amounted to over $60 million in the past year, has aimed to bridge the gap between humanitarian relief and development by building community resilience and addressing the root causes of chronic malnutrition.

In conclusion, we are confident we have the tool, in the integrated strategy, to help address the region's interconnected challenges in an integrated way. The focus, self-evidently, must now be on concrete initiatives. We look forward to the release of the 2014-2016 implementation plan very soon, and we wish the Special Envoy well in her work and stand very ready to support her.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/397) on progress towards the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, presented by his Special Envoy, Ms. Guebre Sellasie. We take this opportunity to congratulate her on her appointment and to recognize the work done by her predecessor, Mr. Romano Prodi.

The report describes the initiatives taken and progress made in implementation of the governance, security and resilience pillars laid out in the integrated strategy for the Sahel, while recognizing the complex challenges and tasks that must be faced to make progress in terms of peace and stability in the region. We note the regional initiatives and the meetings and programmes hosted by the United Nations through its agencies and other members of the international community. They illustrate the importance attached to the situation in the region and the urgency of making progress towards concrete results.

My delegation believes special attention should be paid to strengthening the rule of law and its institutions and engaging in cooperation to that end. We appreciate the series of meetings held under the theme of the first strategic objective, namely governance, particularly considering that a large number of countries will have elections in the coming two years and they will need to be credible, transparent and clean. In that regard, we would like to highlight the importance of ensuring

the full and effective participation of women in those electoral processes from their earliest stages and, in general, in the public political arena and the economic sector. We acknowledge the efforts and work that the United Nations Office for West Africa, UN-Women and the Economic Community of West African States are carrying out in this area.

In relation to the second objective, which is security, the region now faces a complex and difficult situation. The report describes the events in Mali and Libya and the activities of terrorist groups in the region. The uncertainty facing the region due to transnational crime, the activities of extremist groups, trafficking in arms and drugs and environmental issues, among other challenges, continues to hamper progress and requires a swift and appropriate response.

There was a 60 per cent increase in terrorist attacks in the Sahel and the Maghreb between 2012 and 2013 and an increase in the presence of extremist groups and jihadists. Enhanced efforts are therefore needed so that the countries of the region, with the support of the international community, can proceed to establish mechanisms or instruments that enable them to respond to those threats. Only a coordinated response in which there is a fluid exchange of information between national entities will allow them to confront those scourges. We welcome, in that respect, the first meeting of officials from the police, customs and intelligence services who are responsible for border control in 11 countries of the Sahel and Maghreb.

In terms of resilience, the humanitarian situation in the region is fragile, and the numbers in the report are troubling. Twenty million people at risk of food insecurity, 5 million children at risk of malnutrition and over 1.5 million displaced are alarming figures. We hope that the development for the first time of a three-year plan with a view to providing a comprehensive multisectoral response and generating stronger partnerships between the humanitarian community and the development community will respond to those pressing needs. We hope to have more background on the development and implementation of that plan.

At a time when there is talk of donor fatigue, it seems necessary to not only rethink mechanisms to respond to emergencies, but to be generating mechanisms or partnerships to make progress in the region's development. Failure to respond adequately to these situations is to risk allowing criminals and extremist organizations to use precisely such conditions to capture and recruit vulnerable groups, in particular youth.

We take note of the various initiatives and mechanisms adopted in order to make progress on implementing the integrated strategy for the Sahel. We stress the importance of all such initiatives and mechanisms being properly coordinated and maintained over time and, in particular, responding to priorities determined by the countries themselves. Such an approach in which, alongside national ownership, the link between the rule of law, security and development will be recognized, will allow for the complex situation in the region to be adequately addressed.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, for her valuable briefing, which complemented the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/397) on the progress towards the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

Despite the major challenges facing the region caused by the long years of civil conflict, the persistent efforts of the international community, the United Nations and its entities, stakeholders and regional organizations have yielded some progress. Jordan affirms the close link and interdependence among the strategy's three pillars of governance, security and resilience. In that context, we emphasize the following main points.

First, while the countries of the Sahel may urgently require sustained efforts to integrate correct governance principles and build governance structures after years of civil conflict, that process must be based on a stable security situation. It is well known that the security challenge in the Sahel region is not limited to containing or ending civil conflict. It requires further efforts to deal with the trafficking of small arms, illicit drugs, valuable resources and livestock. Obviously, the financial windfalls of such operations may be used to finance the terrorist activities of extremist organizations inside and beyond the region, given the very close linkages between organized crime and terrorism, especially the pervasive corruption and weak State control of the borders.

Secondly, Jordan has repeatedly affirmed the need to focus on partnership and inclusiveness of all groupings — including the religious, ethnic and political sectors — in efforts to restore stability and

rebuild State institutions in the Sahel. Alienation and marginalization policies have led to growing outrage on the part of some groups, thereby broadening social divisions that have led to increased civil strife based on religious, ethnic and tribal factors that have proved extremely difficult to overcome in the recovery period. As witnessed recently, extremist groups have exploited civil conflicts in various regions of the African continent so as to broaden their influence and win the sympathy of sectors of society that have provided them with an enabling environment that has allowed them to penetrate national security agencies and target the international presence.

Thirdly, addressing the difficult humanitarian situation faced by certain countries of the Sahel requires concerted national and international action and persistent efforts to lessen the humanitarian suffering resulting from that situation. In that context, Jordan affirms the need for efficient burden-sharing among national and international parties based on each party's competencies and comparative advantage. We must also work diligently to achieve economic development and create employment opportunities, especially for the young, and provide incentives for migrating capital to return to the homeland, as an important part of the effort to attract investment, while focusing on education as a long-term investment to ensure stability. It is also important to strengthen and rebuild judicial institutions to ensure the entrenching of the rule of law.

Finally, the coordinated efforts of national and international stakeholders and regional organizations to implement the strategy require continued monitoring and evaluation, in view of possible changes in the field that may, in turn, require adjusting some elements of the strategy. We also reaffirm the importance of accurately measuring the impact of efforts to implement the strategy in the field and to redirect financial and human resources to achieve the desired outcome most efficiently.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank Russia for organizing this meeting on the Sahel under its presidency of the Security Council. My thanks also go to the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Ms. Guebre Sellassie, for her introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress achieved in implementing the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (S/2014/397). The report rightly highlights the importance to the international community of taking a coordinated approach to strengthening governance, security, resilience and development in the Sahel region.

Since the beginning of the year, the security situation has deteriorated in northern Mali, Libya and around Lake Chad. We have witnessed an increasing number of violent actions on the part of the terrorist group Boko Haram, and human rights violations and attacks on civilians and members of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, perpetrated by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest, Ansar Dine and Al-Mourabitoune. Those terrorist groups and the criminal networks proliferating throughout the region represent cross-border threats to peace and security that undermine States' authority and hamper development opportunities.

No State is capable of countering the threat alone; strengthened regional cooperation and the support of the international community are needed. Recent activities of the Group of Five for the Sahel — the new regional group comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger— the ongoing efforts of the Economic Community of West African States and the continuing Nouakchott process initiated by the African Union amply illustrate the readiness of countries in the region to strengthen cooperation in security matters.

Beyond security, it is important that the Sahel States make sustained efforts, with the support of the international community, to find lasting solutions to the root causes of instability in the region that have allowed criminal networks and terrorist groups to thrive. We must respond to the structural humanitarian crisis — particularly food security — and support sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic development that creates jobs and ensures basic social services and the development of agriculture and infrastructure, based on lessons learned. Particular attention should be focused on border areas and on the infrastructure that facilitates regional integration. That will further improve territorial control and strengthen States' authority over their territory.

In addition, strengthening democracy, establishing Government infrastructure conducive to development, fighting corruption, promoting and protecting human rights, as well as reconciliation and decentralization, should in our view be at the heart of the action for peace and security in the Sahel. Indeed, resilient democratic institutions are a bulwark against violent radicalization and the emergence of national and regional conflicts.

Today we are witnessing a proliferation of initiatives and international coordination frameworks that reflects the difficulty of developing a common approach to solving the multiple crises that affect the Sahel. Faced with that proliferation, a pragmatic approach is needed. In that context, we believe that the key role should be played by the coordination platform for Sahel strategies, whose chairmanship will be held by Mali from 2013 to 2015. That platform, which was established during the joint visit to the region by the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank last November, has the advantage of bringing together around the same table all the players of the region and their partners, which of course include the European Union. It responds to the need for national and regional ownership and is backed up by a technical secretariat.

We would like to take the opportunity this meeting offers to encourage the United Nations system as a whole, along with all the relevant players, to strengthen in a coordinated way their regional added-value programmes in accord with the road map adopted during the second ministerial meeting of the platform for the coordination of strategies for the Sahel, which was held on 16 May in Bamako.

For our part, through our bilateral and regional cooperation programmes, our contributions to the involvement of the European Union and regional actors and as a new member, since last month, of the African Development Bank, Luxembourg is determined to continue working to strengthen the partnership and the solidarity between the international community and the countries of the Sahel region.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I thank Special Envoy Hiroute Guebre Sellassie for her briefing and take this opportunity to welcome her to her new role. I also want to thank the Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, Said Djinnit, for his work over recent months to begin the implementation of the integrated strategy.

Recent developments again underscored the deep inter-connections between States in the Sahel region. Events in northern Mali in May affected not only Mali itself but the wider region, and the barbaric attacks of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria damaged not only the prosperity and security of Nigeria but also that of its immediate neighbours. To address the threat of Boko Haram, the British Foreign Secretary hosted a meeting on 12 June, in London, to further boost regional cooperation against Boko Haram. Representatives from Nigeria and other countries of the region, the African Union, the United Nations and the European Union attended that meeting, following the Paris summit of 17 May. Participants at the meeting highlighted that the issue of Boko Haram spreads further than Nigeria's borders. They agreed to law enforcement, military and intelligence cooperation to help combat the terrorist threat, and they stressed that security and stability could be achieved only through respect for human rights, alleviating poverty, creating jobs, strengthening the rule of law and building accountable governance.

The complexity and scope of the challenges in the region, taken with what is required to meet them, justify the adoption by the integrated strategy of a flexible definition of the broad Sahel-Sahara region. The broader view is right. It enables the United Nations and the wider international community to flex their responses across the region according to priority needs.

We fully support the integrated strategy's three-pillared approach to activity in the Sahel. All three pillars — governance, security and resilience — are linked. Without concerted progress across each of those agendas, it will be difficult to make lasting overall progress. The Secretary-General's latest report (S/2014/397) shows us that progress has been made in all three areas. It shows what can be achieved by mobilizing both multilateral organizations and the States of the Sahel region. One year into the strategy's implementation phase, more still needs to be done.

First, in the immediate term, with the onset of the annual lean season, the international community must be ready to alleviate the hardship of food insecurity. As the representative of France already pointed out, an estimated 20 million people will endure the pains of food insecurity this year: that is one in eight across the region. The United Kingdom, through its continued commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for development assistance, stands ready to do our part.

Secondly, looking ahead, we must help Sahel States to manage their porous borders more efficiently and enable them to deliver core services such as health, education and justice. The United Kingdom will continue to work with its partners, including the European Union, to help achieve that.

Thirdly, as the Secretary-General's report notes, we should also encourage the development of the Group of Five for the Sahel, and we should encourage those five

countries to enhance their cooperation across a broad regional agenda, including economic cooperation.

The Secretary-General's report calls for an increased level of coordination to make our efforts as effective as possible. The United Kingdom agrees with that conclusion and will support the Special Envoy for the Sahel as she leads the implementation of the integrated strategy and seeks to strengthen governance, resilience and security across the Sahel.

Ms. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I also thank Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel, for her briefing. We welcome her following her recent appointment to a post of such enormous responsibility. Argentina believes that her responsibility is enormous, because that is how we see it here in the Council and throughout the United Nations. The Sahel is one of the areas with the lowest human development indices in the world. The Sahel continues to suffer from enormous shortcomings and it must face longstanding injustices and new threats, such as environmental degradation, to mention only one among so many others. As we see with the conflicts in the Sudan, Libya and Mali, we have not been able to provide a response to the underlying causes of those conflicts, nor to the numerous illegal networks, nor to the threats represented by the various extremist and terrorist groups operating in the region.

However, Argentina has expressed on other occasions that religious beliefs in and of themselves are not the cause of conflicts. There is no religious belief or holy text that is based on hate and that promotes the destruction of peace. That does not exist in any religious belief. What we have in these cases is a mediocre level of politicization on the part of some who hold certain religious beliefs that they contrast with others, creating contradictions and incompatibilities. By the same token, poverty and inequality are not in and of themselves a threat to security; rather, they are a challenge for sustainable human development. But we also know that vulnerable, impoverished people who face discrimination and exclusion, in the absence of jobs, education and social cohesion, are used as tools by extremist and terrorist groups and by transnational criminal networks in order to make them look less like outcasts.

The Security Council should not be surprised to learn that young men and women are used by terrorist or extremist elements or by international organized crime, when the world is under the sway of economic models that encourage runaway consumerism, obscene gains and profits, in which the principle of solidarity is eroded the law of the jungle, and where financial markets, without ethics or law, define the future of peoples and States.

We cannot be surprised about such realities. That is why we are having this debate. And in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, we have the challenge of dealing with the post-2015 and sustainable development goals. The Secretary-General's report (S/2014/397) does not state this specifically, but it clearly lays out those challenges.

When looking at specific conflicts in this region, Argentina has repeatedly emphasized the importance of keeping our eye firmly on the Sahel, underscoring the importance of having an integrated United Nations strategy that encompasses all the various aspects mentioned by my colleagues — security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues. Therefore, when Mr. Prodi introduced the integrated strategy to us, we expressed our expectation that it would constitute an important step towards imposing greater coherence and effectiveness on the existing multitude of parallel and simultaneous national, regional and international programmes.

I do not wish to always be perceived as a voice of doubt and suspicion, but it is really very difficult to accept that if cooperation and coordination constitute an ethical and political decision aimed at cooperating with the Sahel region and enabling us to solve the extreme suffering there, this clearly indicates that failing to coordinate and to confront the obstacles is also a political decision. I would therefore say to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General that if there can be a policy of coordinating action, there can also be a policy that decides not to do so. We thus insist on the need for greater cohesion and effectiveness in the many regional, national and international programmes that the report describes.

We must hear and understand the struggles over who has real power in the Sahel and among external actors. A naive attitude and cosmetic changes will not help to improve security, democracy, the rule of law, development or human rights. We have to know what the dispute is about and who is disputing it. I also believe that it is very important that, instead of directing accusations at those who believe in whatever god, we should be looking at the women and children

who are living in poverty. Let us listen to and welcome the regional meetings where plans are being discussed for the challenges in the Sahel, such as the meeting on 16 May of the ministerial coordination platform for the Sahel, currently chaired by Mali, or the meeting on 16 February launching the Group of Five for the Sahel. These demonstrate the national ownership of the issue by the countries of the region, and we should listen to them in order to understand and thus to learn.

Finally, and briefly, I would like to note three issues that constitute a challenge for the region, as my delegation sees it. The first is that while primary responsibility for peace, security and development in the Sahel lies with the countries of the region, Argentina firmly believes in the importance of support from the international community and the United Nations, especially bearing in mind the other challenges that are also affecting the Sahel, such as climate change and the economic and financial crisis resulting from the actions of the richest countries in the world. We should also take into consideration the issues of financing for humanitarian assistance and that for 2014 the Sahel's humanitarian needs will reach $2 billion.

Secondly, many of the problems we are seeing are the result of deep-rooted causes that require meaningful solutions, not merely palliative ones. Saying that we are ready to eradicate poverty is not the same thing as being willing to reduce extreme poverty. We must affirm that we are willing to cooperate in recognizing and ensuring that women have full enjoyment of their human rights by helping them to become small business owners or parliamentarians, when constitutions change.

Lastly, for the Sahel, too, we must initiate profound change to tackle this crisis and modify the organization and structures of the global economic system so that its economic instruments can become tools that help human development rather than the other way around. We commend the progress that has been made in much of the region and on the African continent and the work of the regional and subregional organizations working on preventing conflict and on peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as in the areas of development and the protection and promotion of human rights.

I would like to point out that it would be helpful for the next report to include detailed information on the progress of th edisbursement of the $1.5 billion for new regional investments promised by the World Bank during the joint visit to the region in November 2013 by its President and the Secretary-General, which we believe was very important. Regarding all the programmes and funds mentioned in the report, we would like to have objective data on the financial totals dedicated to each of the strategic pillars in order to be able follow them up in detail.

There are many challenges, but Argentina is convinced that while the countries and peoples of the Sahel have a difficult road ahead of them, no country should have to despair. We take note of the comments of Chad, and we believe that the proposal for putting together a formal working group to include the representatives of the countries of the region here in New York is a very interesting idea.

Mr. Dunn (United States of America): I would like to begin by thanking the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for her briefing. We welcome Ms. Guebre Sellassie's taking on of this critically important post and look forward to working with her. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report and his leadership on this issue.

As we come together to discuss the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, it is worth noting that this entire initiative is built on the premise that the serious security challenges facing the Sahel are by definition regional. Whether we are speaking of groups carrying out attacks across borders, droughts leading to regional food insecurity or a humanitarian crisis in one country that displaces refugees to several others, we know that these problems are not confined to any one State, and their solutions cannot be either. In order to address such complex transnational problems effectively, we must come up with regional solutions and enlist a full range of actors in carrying them out, including Governments, multilateral and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups.

I would divide the challenges we face in the Sahel — and by "we" I mean all of us who care about the region and its people and who see its security and stability as tied to our own — into two categories. The first consists of emergencies and immediate crises, such as the current instability in Libya and the deteriorating situation in northern Mali, where we have seen renewed fighting. I would also include the growing threat posed by Boko Haram, because, while it was that group's brazen kidnapping of schoolgirls that captured international headlines — and let me be clear, the outrage their abduction has generated is fully justified — that was not an isolated attack. Indeed,

Boko Haram was attacking innocent civilians long before that incident, and since then it has continued to mount attacks with alarming regularity and increasing lethality. Just a few weeks ago, the group massacred scores of citizens along Nigeria's border with Cameroon. It is estimated that the group has killed more than 1,800 civilians this year alone.

There is a clear consensus that the deeds of those extremists, like the instability in Mali and Libya, must be met with a coordinated international response. That consensus was reflected in the ministerial meeting hosted last week by the Government of the United Kingdom, at which the Foreign Ministers of Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, as well as representatives of the European Union, France, Canada, the United Nations, the African Union and my Government agreed upon a unified response to the crisis in Nigeria. That meeting produced concrete commitments from all of the participating countries — from beefing up the multinational joint task force to strengthening the sanctions against Boko Haram's leaders at the international and national levels to ensure that neither their militants nor their coffers find safe haven.

That consensus is reflected at the regional level, as well, in the ongoing work of the ministerial coordination platform, which brings together five Sahelian Governments to collaborate on security and development issues. That same consensus undergirds President Obama's announcement a few weeks ago of the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, which is aiming to work with allies and partners worldwide to respond to the evolving threat posed by violent extremism, including in the Sahel.

The second category of challenges in the Sahel consists of the longer-term chronic problems faced by the region, such as wide-spread environmental degradation, chronic food insecurity and the lack of opportunities for the region's young people. To cite one alarming statistic, at least 20 million people are at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel and nearly 5 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition. Those chronic long-term problems may seem less pressing on the surface, but left unaddressed, chronic problems become crises, and crises demand urgent and often more costly or risk-fraught responses. So if we know that youth under the age of 25 form the largest constituency in the Sahel and that they are the hardest hit by the growing unemployment in the region, and if we know that young people who have no opportunities are particularly vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment into extremist groups, then we must invest more in expanding opportunities for young men and women in the region.

I would like to offer a few recommendations as we continue to work together to address those challenges in the Sahel. While we are on the right track towards adopting a regional multilateral approach to those complex problems, we need to improve our coordination. That means being more mindful of avoiding overlap in prioritizing resouces to ensure that the ones we have provided are used in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Secondly, we must invest in prevention and we must invest in resilience. We need to do a better job of addressing the long-term chronic problems before they metastasize into urgent and large-scale crises. My Government is doing that right now through programmes like the Resilience in the Sahel-Enhanced (RISE) initiative. Announced in February by the United States Agency for International Development, its premise is simple. We invest in making the most vulnerable populations more resilient so they can bounce back when the inevitable crisis comes, whether it is a drought, flood or some other unforeseen but predictable disaster. The United States has dedicated $130 million to RISE over its first two years. The programme is already implementing a range of projects, such as promoting the cultivation of heartier crops in the Niger and working to reduce acute malnutrition in Burkina Faso.

We, the United Nations, have also been doing that through a number of smaller initiatives, like many of those mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report. In one of those initiatives in Mali, the United Nations Development Programme brought together 100 civil society groups to promote the involvement of women in the peace process and local-level dialogue. While programmes like that may not stop the fighting in Mali immediately, they can help empower communities to mitigate the violence and they can lay the foundations for building future peace.

I am convinced that if we can address those problems collectively and collaboratively, as if we are willing to not only react to the emergencies, but also to do more to anticipate them and to address their root causes, then we will be able to make the Sahel more peaceful and more prosperous, which is in all of our

interests. We are confident that the integrated strategy encapsulates those various elements.

Mr. Baublys (Lithuania): I thank Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, for the briefing on the progress towards the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel region. As this is the first briefing of Ms. Sellassie to the Council, allow me to congratulate her upon assuming that position and express our support for her leadership and engagement in tackling the challenges the Sahel region faces. I also wish to commend the United Nations Office for West Africa for its dedicated efforts in the Sahel region.

Throughout the reporting period, we witnessed the further deterioration of the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region, which results from the continuous erosion of State authority linked with humanitarian and development challenges, as well as the adverse effects of climate change. Weak governance, porous borders, illegal migration and arms trafficking, the phenomenal rise of terrorist activities — especially those carried out by Boko Haram and Al-Qaida-affiliated groups — and the lack of development opportunities need to be addressed to prevent the outbreak of crises, such as those we have recently witnessed in Libya, Mali and elsewhere. Enhanced cooperation and coordination among Sahel States are essential in order to prevent threats posed by terrorist groups, notably Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Ansar Eddine and Al-Mourabitoune, that cross borders and seek safe havens in the Sahel region and to combat the activities of those terrorist groups.

It is crucial to ensure that the elections in Libya be held without any delays and broad agreement on the future of the transition of the country is reached among all parties. Recent clashes in northern Mali demonstrated the urgency of making progress in the political dialogue. Further deadlock could have major security consequences for Mali and the wider region.

The security and political challenges in the Sahel continue to be triggered by the precarious humanitarian situation. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/397) states, despite good agricultural and pastoral seasons, at least 20 million people remain at risk of food insecurity and nearly 5 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition. Moreover, the people of the Sahel are extremely vulnerable to the environmental and economic shocks that strike the region frequently. As the Governments of the region have limited capacities to address the multifaceted, cross-cutting security, political and humanitarian challenges, coordinated international engagement is of utmost importance; yet the primary responsibility and ownership for fostering peace, security and development in the Sahel should be in the hands of the countries of the region.

We commend the United Nations engagement in addressing the challenges in the Sahel and support its leading role in coordinating international efforts. The Secretary-General led a visit to the region last November with representatives of the World Bank, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the European Union (EU) and conveyed a clear message of readiness and willingness of international actors to coordinate their efforts. Financial assistance provided by the EU and the World Bank, as well as other members of international community, provides a basis to turn commitments into actions on the ground.

We welcome the Sahel strategies and projects by the EU, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, as well as the establishment of the ministerial coordination platform and other regional initiatives. We also welcome the commitment of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, the Niger and Mali to deepening cooperation and establishing the Group of Five for the Sahel.

With many tools and initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of the crisis in the Sahel, it is crucial to ensure their coherence and avoid duplication. We commend the conclusions of the high-level meeting, held in February 2014 in Brussels, recognizing that the coordination platform for the Sahel should constitute the overall coordination mechanism ensuring the synergies among the various strategies and approaches on the Sahel.

The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and its implementation plan are the right tool to ensure the cooperation and coordination of activities among various actors. We hope that the Group of Five for the Sahel will also get involved.

As the implementation plan, with a focus on governance, security and resilience, has been developed, it is now essential to ensure the coherence of activities on the ground and to deliver tangible results, thereby improving the living conditions of the people in the region. The Security Council should be regularly informed about achievements in the implementation of

the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Setting clear implementation benchmarks would be a useful tool for monitoring progress and for identifying issues that need the further attention of the international community.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's meeting. I also wish to thank Special Envoy Ms. Sellassie for her briefing.

The Sahel is a vast region with a large population and rich natural resources. In recent years, thanks to the ongoing efforts of the regional countries and the strong support of the international community, the overall situation in the Sahel region remains stable. Its economy continues to grow and there has been positive progress in the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. China appreciates the active efforts of the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations in Africa, such as the African Union, and the relevant countries and bodies to improve the situation in the Sahel and to promote development in the region. China welcomes the good work of the newly appointed Special Envoy, Ms. Sellassie, for the implementation of the integrated strategy.

However, it must be acknowledged that the countries of the Sahel still face multifacted challenges, such as uneven development, growing ethnic tension, the spread of terrorism, the proliferation of illicit weapons and increased transnational organized crime. With regard to how to further improve the situation in the Sahel region and encourage the countries of the region to achieve lasting stability and development as soon as possible, I would like to underscore the following three points.

First, support for the efforts of the regional countries to maintain peace and stability is key to improving the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region. Currently, owing to an impasse in the political process and a turbulent security situation, some countries in the region face the threats of increasing terrorist activities, the proliferation of illicit weapons and the spread of transnational organized crime. Effectively dealing with such threats requires the unwavering efforts of the various countries to promote a political process for which they have ownership and to continuously strengthen capacity-building in the area of security. The international community should also strengthen coordination and cooperation so as to provide consistent and effective support to the countries in the region, promote mutual trust through dialogue and cooperation and maintain security and stability in the border areas through common efforts to combat the threats of terrorism and extremism.

Secondly, focusing on addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as poverty and underdevelopment, is the very foundation of lasting stability in the Sahel region. Building on the gradual strengthening, self-reliance and self-development of Sahelian countries, the international community and the international financial institutions should increase humanitarian assistance to the Sahel region, as well as technical support and investment to the countries in the region so as to help those countries to achieve social and economic development and to improve the livelihood of their people. China welcomes the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other financial institutions providing financial support to the Sahel region. We hope that the relevant pledges will be provided as soon as possible.

Thirdly, the international community should actively help the countries of the Sahel region strengthen capacity-building in the area of security through regional cooperation. In recent years, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States have actively promoted the development of a joint security mechanism and have committed themselves to dealing with African issues with an African approach, thus making good efforts to address the issues in the Sahel. The United Nations should fully utilize the role of the Sahel strategy as the coordination platform, coordinate the efforts of various parties and build synergy among various initiatives and strategies for the development of the region.

Finally, the Chinese Government attaches great importance to China-Africa relations and supports African countries in finding a development path appropriate to their national conditions. Through bilateral assistance and by participating in peacekeeping operations, China has supported the countries in the Sahel region in their efforts to achieve stability and development and has done its utmost to help African countries take leadership in addressing their issues, including the problems in the Sahel.

In future, China will continue to support African countries in strengthening capacity-building in the areas of peacekeeping and combating terrorism and piracy. We are ready to further strengthen cooperation

with the United Nations and regional organizations so as to play our part in an early and comprehensive resolution of the issues facing the Sahel region.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank Special Envoy Sellassie for her briefing and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/397).

The briefing that we have just heard and the Secretary-General's report indicate that considerable challenges remain for the Sahel in terms of the three pillars of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, namely, governance, security and resilience.

On governance, we note that more needs to be done by countries in the Sahel to foster greater inclusiveness in their political processes and to improve participation by marginalized groups, including women and young people. Experience shows that the exclusion of entire groups from political participation often generates tension that could cause instability and even conflict.

We also note from the Secretary-General's report that State and public security, national reforms, regional integration and economic development have all been negatively affected by fragile State institutions and weak border management in the Sahelian countries. Insecurity in border areas has affected governance at the local level and reduced the effectiveness of State authority over national territories. There is therefore a need to bolster State institutions and to strengten border management in order for progress to be made in improving governance in the region. One way to achieve better border management would be for contiguous States to collaborate effectively on border issues.

On security, we are concerned that the situation in the Sahel remains precarious. Multiple challenges, including political instability and the activities of organized criminal groups and terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram and groups affiliated with Al-Qaida, as well as extremist armed groups, are significant contributing factors in that state of affairs. The situation has been compounded by porous borders across the region, which allow trafficking in arms and drugs and the virtual unimpeded movement of terrorists.

Such security challenges cannot be overcome by any one country acting alone. The cooperation of all countries of the region and, indeed, of the international community will be essential in order to achieve that. A good example of such cooperation can be seen in the establishment of the multinational joint task force by Chad, the Niger, Cameroon, Benin and Nigeria to carry out coordinated patrols of their common border areas in the fight against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups. The five countries have also created a regional intelligence fusion unit to strengthen intelligence cooperation on terrorism. We would like to acknowledge with gratitude the technical expertise that France, the United Kingdom, the United States, China and Canada are committing to support those and other initiatives in our efforts to fight Boko Haram. We also take this opportunity to thank all nations that have expressed support and good will to us as we confront the menace of Boko Haram.

With respect to resilience, we are deeply concerned about the extremely fragile humanitarian situation in the Sahel. The statistics in the Secretary-General's report paint a grim picture of 20 million people at risk of food insecurity, 5 million children at risk of malnutrition and over 1.5 million displaced. However, the report does not mention the efforts of national Governments and humanitarian actors to provide assistance to those in need. We believe that those efforts should be reflected in subsequent reports in order to allow for an appreciation by the Council of the degree to which the problem is being addressed, especially at the national level.

Experience shows that humanitarian crises can have security implications for the country concerned, as well as for neighbouring countries, if the situation is not carefully managed. We urge the United Nations and other humanitarian actors to pay close attention to the difficult humanitarian situation in the Sahel, with a view to alleviating the hardship faced by those affected by it.

In terms of the implementation of the integrated strategy, we welcome the progress made during the reporting period. We take particular note of the high-level meeting on the situation in the Sahel held on the margins of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly in September 2013, the high-level visit of the Secretary-General and other senior international officials to Mali, the Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad in November 2013, and the various activities of the former Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Romano Prodi. We pay tribute to Mr. Prodi for his service and efforts in support of the Sahel.

The establishment of a steering committee to provide strategic guidance, as well as three United Nations inter-agency working groups on governance, security

and resilience, is a significant step in the implementation of the integrated strategy. We take positive note of the close consultations the United Nations has been holding with other stakeholders, including the African Union (AU), the European Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with a view to agreeing on common priorities and joint programming in the areas of governance and security. It is significant that the activities proposed by the United Nations will be implemented in collaboration with ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States, the AU and other partners. That kind of cooperation is a win-win for all concerned, and we would like to see it strengthened.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate Special Envoy Sellassie on her appointment and assure her of Nigeria's full support for her and her Office.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation.

We support the considerations raised in the briefing made by Ms. Sellassie regarding the situation in the Sahelo-Saharan region. The Russian Federation position regarding the problems facing the region is consistent and unchanged — they require a comprehensive solution and the sustained attention of the international community.

We can see in the region the clear link between the need to establish a sound system of State governance, the search for appropriate responses to security-related challenges, and the provision of sustainable development, in parallel with overcoming significant humanitarian problems. In that respect, in our view, the load-bearing architecture of the integrated strategy, composed of three key pillars, has been well crafted, but more time will be needed to fine-tune this mechanism so that it can operate at full speed.

Significant steps have already been taken towards institutionalizing the formation of the implementation mechanism for the strategy and filling it with concrete content. We would refer first and foremost to the creation of the coordination platform for the Sahel at the ministerial level, whose role will be to become one of the strategy's pivotal components. We welcome the work of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

Those measures are important in bringing the States of the region together around a single platform and the elaboration of a common vision on how to eliminate the root causes of instability. However, positive administrative steps should in no case act as a substitute for real work. Regional initiatives should be backed by a broad spectrum of measures to be taken by the international community. The United Nations, unique in terms of its scope, is indispensable. We are pleased with the interest shown by the representatives of widely differing States and regions, including, of course, Russia. Global and regional financial institutions will be needed, too. There is no question, however, that the leading role in implementing the strategy should fall to the States of the Sahel themselves.

I should like to underscore one further essential issue. We must prevent any fragmentation of our efforts and the resulting dilution of resources. Coordination at all levels will be an important factor in the strategy's success. In that respect, I would be remiss not to recall the particular role played by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Office for West Africa.

We are seriously alarmed by the growing threat that the region may become a bridgehead for well-organized terrorism and criminal structures. In a vast, virtually lawless area where illicit weapons and drugs abound, one cannot but be concerned by the radical views taking root among the young. In such circumstances, it is especially important to agree on common approaches to combating transnational crime and to creating an appropriate legal framework.

It is quite clear that a powerful impetus to the growth of terrorist-related threats in the Sahel was provided by the turbulent and chaotic processes of the so-called Arab Spring. To be frank, on the basis of our observations at least, that term is being used increasingly infrequently. To put it mildly, its outcome is assuredly ambiguous. The chaos in Libya continues to spread well beyond its borders, and the conditions for a positive turning point have, unfortunately, been lacking to date.

The crisis in Mali was a serious challenge to the States of the region. We cannot speak of any sustained positive trends in that country. The whole broad perimeter of the Sahel is turbulent as well. However, and in conclusion, I wish to voice the hope that a constructive pooling of efforts at all levels under the aegis of the United Nations integrated strategy for the

Sahel will contribute to improving the situation and the quality of life of the people of the region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at noon.

United Nations S/PV.7204

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7204th meeting
Monday, 23 June 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. De Antueno
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Llanos
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: I brief today against the backdrop of many unsettling developments in the region. Nonetheless, we should not lose sight of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. With peace negotiations suspended since the end of April and despite the restraint initially displayed by both sides, the situation on the ground has turned highly volatile with several disturbing developments. Intensive search operations in the West Bank for the three Israeli students abducted near Hebron are ongoing with a corresponding increase in violence in the West Bank. The hunger strike by Palestinian administrative and other detainees since 24 April is now in its sixty-first day. New settlement units have been announced. And the fragile calm in Gaza was interrupted by multiple rockets fired at Israel, and the Israeli military response. All these issues, on which the United Nations has pronounced itself unequivocally, can be addressed only if the parties act responsibly and with restraint. Only then can any renewed attempt by the parties to find their way back to meaningful negotiations and to address the much lacking political horizon, in order to avert further escalation, take hold. International engagement and support for that effort should remain unwavering.

The reporting period also witnessed significant political developments on both sides. On 2 June, President Abbas announced the formation of a Government of national consensus headed by Prime Minister Hamdallah on the basis of the Palestine Liberation Organization commitments of recognition of Israel, non-violence and adherence to previous agreements. The Palestinian President added that elections would be organized within six months. On 10 June, Israel elected long-time member and two-time Speaker Reuven Rivlin of the Knesset as the next President to succeed Shimon Peres.

The situation in the West Bank — already tense with demonstrations in support of Palestinian detainees — has worsened. In the evening of 12 June, three Israeli students — a 19-year-old and two 16-year-olds — were reported missing. Their abduction has been roundly condemned, including by the Secretary-General, who has expressed his outrage publicly and in a phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. Israel blamed the abduction on Hamas, an allegation Hamas has reportedly since denied. We nevertheless find Hamas statements glorifying the perpetrators of that act to be outrageous. If Hamas involvement is corroborated, that would indeed constitute a grave development.

Search operations by Israeli security forces have extended to the rest of the West Bank, including in major population centres. Israeli authorities also implemented tightened movement restrictions, including prohibiting men from Hebron between the ages of 20 and 50 years from crossing the Allenby Bridge into Jordan, the only international crossing for West Bankers. We are concerned by reports that over 350 Palestinians have now been arrested, many injured and four Palestinians killed, including one minor on 20 June. The rising death toll as a result of Israeli security operations in the West Bank is alarming. We condemn all killings of civilians and call for an investigation into any such deaths. Reportedly, the Israeli Cabinet also voted to impose harsher conditions on detainees affiliated with Hamas who are in Israeli custody.

As the search for the missing youths continues, we call for restraint in carrying out the security operations, in strict compliance with international law and while avoiding punishing individuals for offences they have not personally committed. Detentions included those of reported Hamas affiliates and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, notably Speaker Aziz Dweik, as well as over 50 Palestinians previously released as part of the so-called "Shalit deal".

Palestinian security forces continued their work to maintain law and order. Earlier, on 5 June, Palestinian security forces reportedly uncovered and seized in Hebron explosives, knives, flags and military uniforms allegedly belonging to Hamas.

Overall, since our last briefing (see S/PV.7178), Israeli security forces carried out a total of 607 search and arrest operations and detained an estimated 928 Palestinians. Five Palestinians were shot dead, including during search operations for the missing, and 291 injured, including during demonstrations against the barrier and in support of Palestinians in administrative detention. Twelve Israeli security forces personnel were also injured. We are alarmed that there are significant increases in all of those categories since our last briefing.

Settler attacks, on the rise during this period, resulted in 18 Palestinians injured, including three children, and damage to Palestinian property. Palestinian attacks, mostly consisting of stone- and Molotov cocktail-throwing, resulted in injuries to seven Israelis. The Israeli authorities have not disclosed yet the findings of their investigation into the deaths of two Palestinian youths on 15 May.

Settlement activity, illegal under international law, continued apace with the announcement on 4 June of the issuance of tenders for over 1,400 new settlement units in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, and reports that the Israeli authorities had advanced plans for some 1,000 settlement housing units following Prime Minister Netanyahu's reported decision to unfreeze planning processes for 1,800 settlement units. On 18 June, 172 settlement units were announced in the settlement of Har Homa, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

The demolition of 65 Palestinian structures resulted in the displacement of some 112 Palestinians, including 56 children. Israeli authorities destroyed or seized a total of 28 donor-funded humanitarian assistance items, including on 5 June of a water and sanitation consignment en route to a vulnerable Bedouin community in Al-Ganoub, in the southern West Bank.

The Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights remain gravely concerned about the deteriorating health of those Palestinian prisoners on prolonged hunger strikes. Both have repeatedly called attention to the situation of prisoners on administrative detention and reiterated their long-standing position that administrative detainees should be charged or released without delay. The United Nations is concerned about the Government-sponsored legislative amendment before the Israeli Knesset that, if adopted, would permit force-feeding and medical treatment of prisoners on hunger strike against their will under certain conditions, in contravention of international standards. The Government-sponsored bill passed its first reading in the Knesset on 9 June, despite strong objections raised by national and international medical and human rights organizations.

Tensions also continued around the holy sites in the Old City. Since our last briefing, access restrictions were imposed on several occasions on Palestinians, and clashes between worshippers and Israeli security forces resulted in tens of Palestinians injured and detained, including on 13 June. We call on all parties to show the utmost restraint regarding the holy compound and to fully respect the sanctity of holy sites of all faiths.

In Gaza, the prevailing calm started unraveling, especially following the abduction of the Israeli students. Since our last briefing, a total of 39 rockets and four mortar shells were fired towards Israel. Two rockets exploded at launching sites and 17 dropped short in Gaza, injuring two Palestinian girls on 16 June. Three rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, but four mortar shells and 19 rockets landed in open areas of Israel, including two near the city of Ashkelon, without resulting in injuries. Israel conducted a total of 5 incursions and 38 airstrikes into Gaza, resulting in the death of a Palestinian militant and a seven year-old child. Another Palestinian civilian died on 8 June from injuries after being shot at by the Israeli Navy on 26 May. A total of 10 Palestinian militants and eight Palestinian civilians were injured by Israeli fire. We continue to condemn indiscriminate rocket firing against civilians as well as any loss of civilian life. We further call on all Palestinian factions to adhere to the calm as per the understandings reached in the lead-up to the unity agreement. Of chief importance is the need to support the Palestinian Authority's efforts to take up security functions in Gaza and to unify the security forces under one legitimate authority.

The persisting dire socioeconomic situation as the result of a tightened access regime and continued violence has seriously complicated prospects for the new Government of national consensus in assuming its functions and delivering tangible improvements to the lives of Gazans, which the United Nations had pledged to support. The tension over the payment of salaries is but one manifestation of the immediate challenges as the Palestinian Authority attempts to reunify the institutions. Existing acute de-development indicators remain of concern, including rates of food insecurity

at 57 percent, and unemployment at 41 percent, disproportionately affecting youth.

Much of Gaza's challenges still require structural solutions, which remain unaddressed. Following the abduction incident on 12 June and the ensuing rocket firing, the Kerem Shalom crossing was closed from 15 to 17 June but for the transfer of fuel supplies; it has been re-opened fully since 18 June. Since our last report to the Council, there have been no approvals for the resumption of additional United Nations construction projects, and pre-approved work stalled as a result of the crossings being closed. Open crossings, both for goods and people, access to construction material, re-establishing trade links between the West Bank and Gaza, and exports are as urgently needed as ever to kickstart the economy and create job opportunities. Rafah was only open for seven days during the reporting period.

Under the current strenuous circumstances, although it will not be easy, the United Nations will continue to deliver assistance to the people in Gaza in close cooperation with the newly appointed ministers.

Turning to Lebanon, the constitutional deadline to elect a new President expired on 25 May. Presidential powers transferred to the Council of Ministers under the leadership of Prime Minister Salam, in accordance with the Constitution. Seven parliamentary sessions have been called so far, but the necessary quorum was not achieved. We again underline the urgency for Lebanon's leaders to ensure the election of a President without further delay and stress the importance for the Government meanwhile to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

The security situation has remained relatively calm with the implementation since April of security plans for Tripoli and the Bekaa. However, a suicide car bomb at a security checkpoint in Dahr Al-Baidar on 20 June killed a member of the internal security forces. The bombing coincided with an extensive police raid in Beirut's district of Hamra in which several suspects were arrested after security agencies received information about possible new terror attacks, which resulted in raising the state of alert in Beirut and elsewhere. In the past month, there have also been at least five air strikes by Syrian aircraft in Lebanese territory and three cross-border shelling incidents from Syria.

More than 1.1 million Syrian refugees are now registered in Lebanon. On 31 May, the Interior Minister announced that Syrian refugees who returned to Syria would lose their refugee status in Lebanon. Restrictions on the entry of Palestine refugees from Syria have been reintroduced. The situation in Palestinian camps remains of concern, with an explosion in Ain Al-Hilweh on 19 May, allegedly targeting a Fatah official. Faction leaders have sought to coordinate with Lebanese authorities to address the concerns, especially in Ain Al-Hilweh.

In Rome on 17 June, the Government of Italy hosted a ministerial conference within the framework of the International Support Group for Lebanon on support to the Lebanese armed forces. Participants from 43 delegations welcomed the announcement of new assistance to the Lebanese Army and encouraged further assistance in priority areas. The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and along the Blue Line remained generally calm and stable, despite almost daily Israeli violations of Lebanese air space.

Turning to Syria, on 20 June the Secretary-General reiterated his deep concerns about the continued levels of violence and human suffering and destruction in Syria, and I would like to reiterate the six points he offered on Friday as a way to help address the situation in a principled and integrated fashion.

Ending the violence is the most immediate priority. It is essential that the flow of arms and fighters pouring into the country be stemmed. In order to achieve that, an arms embargo must be imposed. Local ceasefire arrangements, however imperfect, are taking place and are enabling us to deliver much-needed aid and to curtail the levels of violence. We should turn those war agreements into peace agreements. Such an arrangement was reached most recently in Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus over the weekend.

Secondly, we must do our utmost to protect the human rights, safety and dignity of the Syrian people, 3.5 million of whom are in hard-to-reach locations. The sieges must end and immediate, unfettered humanitarian access across internal front lines and borders must be allowed.

Thirdly, we desperately need new efforts to start a serious political process for a new Syria. The Secretary-General will soon name a new envoy, who

must be afforded full cooperation and support by all international and regional actors.

Fourthly, any credible peace process will have to address the question of ensuring accountability for the serious crimes that have been committed by all sides.

Fifthly, while a major landmark was achieved today with the removal of the last remaining identified chemicals, finishing the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria remains an imperative. The joint effort of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations has been essential in reinforcing the global norm prohibiting chemical weapons.

Sixthly, and finally, the prolongation of the conflict in Syria has created fertile ground for radical armed groups, including those affiliated with Al-Qaida. Recent events in Iraq have demonstrated vividly that the Syrian conflict can have devastating impact on neighbouring countries and far beyond.

Recent serious incidents along the area of separation supervised by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) are a further grave reminder of the risk of regional escalation caused by the Syrian conflict. Yesterday, approximately 300 metres north of UNDOF position 52, firing from the Bravo side to the Alpha side killed an Israeli teenager and injured three Israeli contractors, including the teenager's father, who were carrying out work along the Israeli technical fence. The Israel Defence Forces retaliated with several rounds of tank fire and again with air strikes in the early hours today. UNDOF personnel in the area went into shelter and were not affected, and UNDOF is currently investigating the incident. All involved should exercise the utmost restraint, respect their mutual obligations and halt firing of any kind across the ceasefire line.

We are facing a moment of real crisis that is testing the region in new ways. Negative forces on multiple fronts in the Middle East continue to draw strength by sowing strife and frustrating viable options for a political solution. We should take this as a wake-up call that challenges all of us to work together to restore the prospects for a durable regional peace. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, both sides have a responsibility to exercise maximum restraint in order to contain what has rapidly developed into a critical security situation on the ground, restore calm and create opportunities to return to a negotiating process. This is a time for renewed impetus and political will aimed at ending the conflict and the occupation that have already scarred the lives of far too many Israelis and Palestinians for far too long. We must work together now to build a better future for the people of the region.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I also want to express our collective appreciation to the Special Representatives and special coordinators of the United Nations, their teams and the United Nations country teams, who are working so heroically and diligently in this region, helping to address the challenges I have outlined in today's briefing.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7205

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7205th meeting

Tuesday, 24 June 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin/Mr. Pankin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Šimonović, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Zagreb.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zerihoun.

Mr. Zerihoun: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on recent developments in Ukraine.

Due in large part to the initiative taken by President Petro Poroshenko since his inauguration on 7 June to find a peaceful, lasting resolution to the crisis in Ukraine and to the unrelenting efforts of the international community, there are encouraging signs towards a de-escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, and political and diplomatic steps are beginning to be taken towards the resolution of the crisis.

On 20 June, Ambassador Yuriy Sergeyev of Ukraine provided the Secretary-General with an official copy of President Poroshenko's peace plan, which included de-escalatory measures such as amnesty for those who did not participate in serious crimes, disarmament, the decentralization of power and early local and parliamentary elections, and a programme for creating jobs in the region.

Simultaneously, upon the advice of his military commanders informing him that the border with the Russian Federation had been secured, on 20 June President Poroshenko announced the start of a one-week unilateral ceasefire aimed at giving armed militia a window of opportunity to disarm. Government forces were ordered to withdraw from their engagements, allowing rebels a chance to lay down their weapons. According to the plan, all rebels who surrender peacefully and who have not committed grave crimes would be granted amnesty. Also, with a view to engaging with Ukraine's eastern regions, the President travelled on 19 June to the Donbass region, where he met with civil society, business and community leaders. The following day, he travelled to conflict areas in Donetsk and Lugansk.

On 21 June, the Secretary-General spoke to President Poroshenko over the phone, expressing his encouragement over the peace plan and in particular the start of a unilateral ceasefire. At the same time, the Secretary-General voiced concern that it might be difficult to halt the violence without the engagement of the armed groups. The Secretary-General has since been pleased to see that peace talks have reportedly started with representatives of the armed groups in eastern Ukraine, led by former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and with the participation of the Russian ambassador to Ukraine and European officials. The Secretary-General has stressed that such talks are indispensable to efforts to help defuse tensions.

The Secretary-General has also taken note of the fact that the armed militia groups have agreed to reciprocate the ceasefire, despite previously rejecting the President's offer and continuing their offensive. Overall, the ceasefire is holding. The Secretary-General expects all sides to live up to the ceasefire and to leave the door open for effective negotiation and mediation towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Today, according to reports, in a welcome development that will not only help reduce tensions but also improve the chances for a negotiated settlement, President Putin asked the Russian Parliament to revoke the authorization given to him to send troops to Ukraine. President Poroshenko's office welcomed the move as the first practical step after President Putin expressed support for the peace plan. While those are important steps with the potential to de-escalate the situation, the Secretary-General remains deeply concerned that the realities on the ground are still grave and deeply worrying.

Until those recent political developments, fierce fighting, particularly in eastern Ukraine, had raged on, claiming hundreds of lives and injuring many more, including civilians. Arms, weapons and fighters had crossed Ukraine's border, making the situation more complex and more violent. Various rebel groups had sprung up, uncoordinated, and are reportedly not fighting for any apparent political cause.

Even after President Poroshenko's announced ceasefire, the armed groups had publicly rejected the offer and continued their assault on Ukrainian forces on the night of 20-21 June, reportedly injuring six servicemen. During that same period, other reports indicate that Ukrainian forces also continued their security operations, although it was unclear if they were merely defending themselves against attacks. The Russian Federation has reported that shells from those exchanges had crossed its border, causing material damage.

On 14 June, a Ukrainian Ilyushin-76 military transport aeroplane was shot down while approaching an airport in Luhansk. The aeroplane was targeted by armed militia on its approach to the Luhansk airport and crashed at 12.50 a.m. local time. All 49 people on board, including 40 paratroopers, were killed.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitors abducted almost a month ago on 26 and 29 May are still being held captive. The Secretary-General has reiterated his call for their immediate and unconditional release.

The fighting has resulted in loss of lives and caused much suffering to innocent people. It is for the sake of those innocent people that efforts must be made to urgently capitalize on the progress that has been made in the political and diplomatic areas.

The Secretary-General has been stressing all along that the international community cannot afford to fail Ukraine and its people. He has reiterated the pressing need for the international community to work together to stop the hostilities and help achieve lasting peace. President Poroshenko's peace plan has received support from key parties in the country, the region and beyond. However, there is still more hard work to be done. The international community needs to support Ukraine in surmounting the current crisis and finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the challenges facing the country. The United Nations stands ready to support all efforts to that end.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Šimonović.

Mr. Šimonović: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Council on the situation of human rights in Ukraine. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has just issued the third monthly report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine. The report covers the period from 7 May to 7 June. In this briefing, I will also provide some updates since the report's 7 June cut-off date.

The report outlines some positive developments that have occurred over the period through a number of initiatives and legislative changes. They include legislative amendments to combat discrimination and corruption. There have also been legislative developments relating to amnesty, the lustration of judges, language rights, ethnic policy, torture and ill-treatment, the media and the reform of law enforcement agencies. These are important pieces of legislation that will go a long way towards ensuring that proper legal safeguards are put in place to address some of the root causes of the crisis.

The Government has also taken steps towards the implementation of the Geneva statement of 17 April through the organization of round tables on national unity. The outcome of these round tables contributed to Parliament's adoption on 20 May of a resolution entitled "Memorandum of concord and peace". The memorandum foresees the adoption of a constitutional reform package that includes the decentralization of power, special status for the Russian language, judicial and police reform, and an amnesty law for anti-Government protesters in the east who would agree to give up weapons, excluding those who have committed serious crimes against life and physical integrity. This is a welcome development.

The report notes that the presidential election took place on 25 May, with relatively few human rights violations in most of the country. However, serious human rights violations took place in that context in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, where attacks on election commissions and commissioners occurred throughout the pre-electoral period and during the election, disrupting the holding of elections and depriving a large proportion of residents of their right to vote.

Progress in the ongoing accountability processes for the Maidan violence, as well as for the 2 May incidents in Odesa, remains slow. Some arrests of Berkut forces have taken place, but there have been no prosecutions so far in the case of the 113 persons killed during the Maidan events between November 2013 and February 2014.

With regard to the tragic events of 2 May in Odesa, no fewer than six investigations have been launched. Our report so far points towards grave inaction, and concerns with the conduct of the police and the fire brigade in taking the necessary measures to prevent the incidents and ensuing casualties. The proliferation of investigations carries a high risk of miscommunication and consequent contamination of evidence. The lack of transparency in the investigations is also of concern. It will be crucial for these investigations to be carried out thoroughly, promptly and impartially.

I shall now turn to the east of the country, where we are seeing the most serious human rights challenges.

The report highlights the rapidly deteriorating situation in the east. However, the situation has deteriorated even further, since the cut-off date of the report. Estimates based on information gathered from official sources indicate that from 15 April to 20 June, 423 people, including servicemen and civilians, were killed. There has been an increase in arms and recruitment for armed groups. Representative of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic have recognized the presence within their ranks of armed groups of citizens of the Russian Federation, including from Chechnya and other republics of the North Caucasus.

Abductions and detentions by armed groups remain a worrying trend. The lawlessness continues to spread. Human rights abuses by the armed groups are increasing and common criminality is rising. The monitors have recorded 222 cases of abduction and detention by armed groups since 13 April. Of these, as of 7 June, 4 had been killed, 81 remained in detention and 137 had been released.

In the context of the Government's security operations, there has been an increase in reports of enforced disappearances and of excessive use of force that have led to casualties among the population. Despite security constraints, we continue to monitor these incidents and to raise them with the Government. While we have not received reports of the deliberate targeting of the population, we are verifying allegations that security forces could have taken measures to prevent civilian casualties. The Government must ensure that its armed forces refrain from using excessive force and that its security operations are at all times in line with relevant international human rights standards.

The population is leaving, partly due to fear, but also because of the worsening situation of economic and social rights. Over the past two weeks, the population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has doubled in the country, with a large movement of people — estimated at some 15,200 — within the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As of 23 June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had profiled more than 46,100 IDPs, 11,500 from Crimea and nearly 34,600 from the east. In the absence of a formal registration system, and given the limited access to some areas by humanitarian partners, the number of IDPs is likely to be higher.

The Government has been encouraged to respond to the humanitarian needs of IDPs, including by establishing a comprehensive registration system, formulating legislative and regulatory acts to ease access to important social and economic rights, and establishing public assistance programmes. The mobilization and coordination of civil society-initiated relief efforts, and cooperation with international donors and technical assistance, are also crucial.

The report indicates that in May, studies had to be suspended in several towns in the east, affecting 21,700 pupils. Hospitals remain overcrowded and understaffed, medical supplies are low, and the Ministry of Health reports that up to 10 hospitals in the eastern regions are now closed. Food prices have skyrocketed. Seasonal vegetables are now on average four to fivetimes more expensive than before. Meanwhile, it is becoming increasingly difficult for businesses to operate and people to go to work. There have been, for instance, armed attacks on mining companies, which constitute the main share of the region's economy.

About half of the population of the Donetsk region is experiencing some problems with access to water. Since last week, in Slovyansk there has been no running water. Around 90 per cent of the town is now cut off from electricity. Phones do not work most of the time and public transport does not function.

The situation of journalists is also alarming. The Council rightly condemned the recent killing of two

Russian journalists by mortar fire, which followed the killing of an Italian photojournalist and his Russian interpreter on 24 May. While the perpetrators of those recent attacks are yet to be identified, it will be highly important to ensure accountability.

The report describes the situation in Crimea as a legal limbo. Although Ukrainian legislation is supposed to remain in force, also in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/262, legal institutions in Crimea are already being required to comply with the provisions of legislation of the Russian Federation. That has very practical effects, as some 15,000 judicial cases remain in legal limbo between Ukrainian and Russian laws and legal systems.

The Crimean Tatar population has been facing some concerning limitations on their enjoyment of the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association and religion.

The United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine has so far been playing an important role in defusing tensions through its impartial reporting on the human rights situation. It can play an equally useful role through human rights and humanitarian confidence-building measures. The mission has already facilitated numerous releases of individuals detained by the armed groups. However, such measures should be based on reciprocity, and individuals that are arbitrarily detained by the authorities must also be released if there is no well-founded legal basis for them to remain in detention. As the mission has contacts on all sides, it will continue to support and facilitate such initiatives.

President Poroshenko's recently announced peace plan and unilateral ceasefire is a positive step in the right direction. It is also encouraging to learn of yesterday's announcement by the armed groups that they would observe a ceasefire until Friday. That creates a window of opportunity for human rights and humanitarian confidence-building measures.

Beyond the immediate crisis response, respect for all the human rights of everyone living in Ukraine is a prerequisite for sustainable peace. The United Nations human rights monitoring mission stands ready to support the Government of Ukraine, as well as civil society and various national and social groups, to make that happen.

With your permisison, Mr. President, I will now disconnect from the video teleconference. Because of an unforseen change in my flight schedule, I will need to depart now to catch a flight to Bujumbura.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Šimonović for his briefing. Mr. Šimonović has asked for my leave to depart. I cannot deny it, as he has given his briefing to the Security Council. Given that he has an urgent reason, we will indeed grant that leave. I would be grateful if one of his assistants could listen in to our discussion.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Power (United States of America): Time and again — at least 17 times since February — we have gathered here to discuss the situation in Ukraine. And time and again, we have had to dedicate significant amounts of time to reviewing the efforts of Russia to destabilize its neighbour and to refuting the bald misinformation and outright fiction about what is happening on the ground in Ukraine.

Russian rhetoric has been inaccurate, inflammatory and self-justifying. On 17 June, just last week, Foreign Minister Lavrov accused Ukrainian military authorities of carrying out ethnic cleaning. Days earlier, a leader in the Duma accused Ukraine of committing mass genocide. My Government, the Security Council and the United Nations take extremely seriously any reports of ethnic cleaning or genocide. But baseless claims like those have the effect of radicalizing Russian separatists, escalating this horrible crisis and further eviscerating the credibility of Russian reports from the region.

We should consider such claims alongside the facts on the ground, such as the situation of the ethnic Tatar community in Crimea following Russia's purported annexation, which the international community will never recognize. The homes of Tatar leaders have been arbitrarily searched and editors of their main newspaper have been threatened with prosecution. Tatars who have participated in peaceful protests have been locked up by the dozens, and many more insulted and harassed for speaking their language in public. And its members have been told that they and all Crimeans must give up their Ukrainian citizenship or else be treated like foreigners in their own land.

Meanwhile, in areas controlled by illegal separatist groups in south-east Ukraine, we continue to see Russia's extensive support for the campaign of violence and separatist terror. The crimes committed by those

groups are methodically documented in the United Nations monitoring mission's reports and follow a pattern set by Russia's unlawful intervention in Crimea. They include the violent seizure and occupation of public and Government buildings, unprovoked lethal attacks against Ukrainian security forces and arbitrary arrests, torture, beatings, death threats, disappearances, killings and other serious abuses carried out by Russian fighters and the pro-Russian separatists.

We do not need to look very far or hard to find evidence of that campaign. We see it in the three T-64 Russian tanks that suddenly showed up in the hands of separatists in eastern Ukraine. We see it in the burned out BM-21 rocket launcher, one of many that suddenly appeared in eastern Ukraine in the past weeks, which photographs show recently belonged to Russia's eighteenth motorized rifle brigade, based in Chechnya. We see it in surface-to-air missiles that were recently seized by Ukrainian forces after a clash with separatists; they were still accompanied by their official paperwork, revealing that as recently as two months ago those missiles were held on a Russian air-defence base in the Krasnodar region. Those are just the type of surface-to-air missiles, I would note, that were used to bring down a Ukrainian military transport plane last week, killing all 49 people on board. And we see it in the alarming redeployment of thousands of Russian troops and military hardware along the border with Ukraine, at the closest proximity since the invasion of Crimea in February.

Russia has attempted — erroneously — to characterize the events unfolding in eastern Ukraine as a humanitarian crisis. They falsely have cast themselves as the defender of rights and vindicator of the vulnerable, and the Russian army and its operatives as a humanitarian aid agency. But this Russian aid operation sends soldiers, not doctors. It mans armoured personnel carriers, not relief tents. It provides surface-to-air missiles, not meals ready-to-eat.

Russia claims that 100,000 people have fled Ukraine for Russia. Yet Under-Secretary-General Amos informed the Council in a briefing last week that the real number was around 4,600. I do not for one moment intend to minimize the very real humanitarian consequences of the crises in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, including the tens of thousands of internally displaced people within Ukraine's borders. But we have to be objective and fact-based in our claims, and candid about what has brought about these dire humanitarian consequences, namely, the political and military support that Russia continues to provide to armed violent separatists.

Yet, remarkably, even in the face of separatist attacks and inflammatory propaganda, the Ukrainian Government and Ukrainian people have shown in word and in deed a sustained willingness to work towards a peaceful solution. The Ukrainian people elected a leader, Petro Poroshenko, who campaigned on creating a democratic, unified and peaceful Ukraine. Since taking office, President Poroshenko has persistently sought to achieve that goal through dialogue and reconciliation, even in the face of provocations and violence. He proposed, and then implemented, a unilateral ceasefire to allow separatists to lay down their arms. He offered to create a safe passage for Russian fighters to return to their country. And he proposed amnesty to Russian-backed separatists who had not committed serious crimes.

We welcome yesterday's reports that representatives of the Ukrainian and Russian Governments and separatists groups met together, leading to an announcement by some separatist leaders that they would respect the ceasefire. President Poroshenko and his Government have taken steps to decentralize power, increase transparency, combat corruption and protect the rights of minorities. And he has put on the table a comprehensive and just peace plan. In sum, he and the Ukrainian people have done everything that could be expected, in an effort to make peace in accordance with international law and norms.

Over the last few days, we have seen more contradictory behaviour on the part of Russia. On the one hand, President Putin expresses his support for President Poroshenko's ceasefire and his intention to work towards a peaceful settlement. That is a welcome development. Yet, on the other hand, Russia has recently returned a significant number of its troops to the border and has ramped up the flow of weapons and materiel to separatists, an increasing number of whom are Russian citizens with no personal connection to eastern Ukraine.

President Putin has also placed Russian troops on combat alert and launched a new surprise military exercise. President Putin's recent statements are welcome. But it is hard to take a little rhetoric of reconciliation seriously when it is accompanied by actions that are clearly aimed at stoking tension. It is even harder to take seriously given that Russia's

track record of repeatedly breaking its commitments to dialogue and to peace, as it did after the Geneva statement in April and after the pledges that President Putin made to President Obama in Normandy earlier this month. While we welcome the more conciliatory rhetoric from President Putin in recent days, those words now need to be reflected in a genuine shift in the facts on the ground. Those facts are best gathered by unbiased reporting, like that conducted by international monitoring missions. But the Russians and the armed separatists that they support do not seem comfortable with facts or with monitors.

As we sit here, eight monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are being held captive for the crime of bearing witness and gathering facts, actions that are dangerous only to those who would distort those facts. The monitors have been held captive for nearly a month — a month — by separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk, with no justification. For these crimes there must be consequences. There also must be continued consequences for Russia's consistent violations of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and for its ongoing failure to meet the commitments it has made. And there must be consequences for the widespread crimes and abuses committed by the armed separatists Russia supports — both because the victims of those crimes merit justice and because, as we have seen, unless Russia feels effective pressure to de-escalate, it will continue to choose to escalate the crisis.

We have urged Russia to be part of the political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. But, if it persists with the same escalatory tactics, it must face additional costs.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zerihoun and Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović for the briefings that we have just heard and for the detailed and thorough work being undertaken by the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine.

Let me start with the positive. The United Kingdom strongly supports the peace plan set out by President Poroshenko on 20 June. That plan builds on earlier steps taken by the Government of Ukraine to implement the Geneva statement of 17 April. They include holding three rounds of national dialogue and submitting a draft law on amnesty for those who hand over illegal arms and who vacate illegally occupied buildings. The Government of Ukraine has also initiated constitutional reform and decentralization and has guaranteed protection and a special status for the Russian language. The peace plan constitutes a genuine and far-reaching set of proposals, which now create a major opportunity for de-escalation. Now is the moment for others to reciprocate.

We welcome the fact that President Poroshenko's peace plan has received at least a measure of support from Russia. President Putin has described the declaration of a ceasefire as without question an important step towards reaching a settlement and has said that Russia will certainly support those plans. We also note reports from Moscow that President Putin has asked the Russian Parliament to revoke the right of military intervention in Ukraine. Although we emphatically reject any suggestion that the decision by the Russian Parliament would confer any legitimacy on Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, it would send a positive signal that needs to be reinforced by positive actions.

Russia must now back up those statements with actions to tackle instability in southern and eastern Ukraine. Those actions must include the following: first, adopting effective measures to prevent the continued flow of illegal fighters, arms and equipment from Russia into Ukraine; secondly, applying its influence over separatist groups to ensure that they renounce violence, lay down their arms and commit themselves to addressing their grievances through the peaceful and democratic mechanisms that are available to them; and, thirdly, continuing the withdrawal of troops from near the Ukrainian border.

Russia has created facts on the ground through its direct support for armed separatist groups. It must now reverse the dynamics it has created, by preventing the flow of arms and fighters into Ukraine and using its influence over armed separatist groups so that they stop their illegal activities. If that does not happen, the countries of the European Union, including at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting yesterday, have reiterated their readiness to take further measures against Russia.

I now come to the latest human rights monitoring report. The Ukrainian Government has engaged constructively with the mission, highlighting its commitment to transparency and to upholding the human rights of its citizens. It is disappointing that, once again, Russian Government sources have criticized the report and impugned the professionalism

and integrity of the monitors and of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as a whole. We encourage the Government of Ukraine to address concerns raised in the mission's report of a lack of cooperation among the six different investigations into the tragic events of 2 May in Odessa, what Mr. Šimonović called "grave inaction" just now. We also urge the Government to ensure the security of all diplomatic missions. We condemn unreservedly the attack against the Russian Embassy in Kyiv on 14 June. Establishing confidence in the rule of law in Ukraine is essential. The United Kingdom, together with our partners, is ready to support the Ukrainian Government as they tackle reforms in those areas.

The mission's latest report highlights the role played by illegal armed groups in Donetsk and Luhansk in preventing many voters in those regions from participating in the presidential elections of 25 May. The separatist tactics of threatening, beating and abducting staff of the Electoral Commission, destroying voter lists and ballot boxes and seizing control of polling stations demonstrate a contempt for democracy and a determination to prevent the people of those regions from having a voice in the future of Ukraine.

As the latest report underlines, the actions of illegal armed groups have led to a deterioration in the human rights situation in Donetsk and Luhansk. Having violently seized control, those groups are failing to provide public services and are damaging vital infrastructure. We are deeply disturbed by the mission's findings of abductions, detentions, ill treatment, torture, looting and killings being carried out by those groups against the broader civilian population.

The monitoring mission has reported 222 cases of abductions and detentions by illegal armed groups. They have also recorded numerous allegations of ill treatment and torture, starvation of prisoners, beatings, electric shocks and even amputation, which are all reportedly being used by pro-Russian groups. It is no surprise that the mission's report concludes that areas under separatist control are characterized by an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

The monitoring mission's report cites compelling evidence of the use of propaganda and misinformation to generate a climate of fear and instability in Ukraine. That includes the use by the Russian media of doctored photographs and re-purposed film footage. The report notes, for example, the footage used to substantiate claims that Ukraine was using United Nations marked helicopters, a claim also made in the Chamber by the Russian Federation, was in fact filmed in other countries at an earlier date. For example, a photograph of such a helicopter presented by Russia as evidence to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was in fact taken in 2011 in Côte d'Ivoire. There are numerous other examples of misinformation, including footage claiming to show incendiary weapons being used by the Ukrainian military, which was in fact filmed in November 2004 in Iraq. On one occasion recently, the Russian Permanent Representative urged us all to follow the Russian media for an accurate picture of what is going on in Ukraine. On the evidence of this report, I think that most of us would beg to differ with that.

The mission's latest report also confirms that in Crimea the introduction of Russian legislation is undermining Ukrainian citizens' enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Pro-Ukrainians are being targeted and intimidated with increasing discrimination, especially in the areas of education and employment. We underline that the United Kingdom will not recognize or accept Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.

Over a succession of Council meetings, we have seen a deterioration of the security situation in parts of Ukraine caused by illegal armed separatist groups. We have seen growing evidence of human rights abuses, in large part because of the actions of those armed groups, and we have witnessed a growing humanitarian challenge. The peace plan put forward by President Poroshenko provides an opportunity to break out of that downward spiral. Yesterday's OSCE-brokered talks in Donetsk seem to have given positive momentum to that. The United Kingdom urges the Council to give strong and united support to that plan. It urges the Ukrainian Government to press forward purposefully with its implementation, and it urges the Russian Federation to follow up on its positive statements with positive actions that will cut off political and practical support to armed separatist groups and allow a process of dialogue and democratic engagement to take root.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, wish to thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing and Mr. Šimonović for introducing the third report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine. I understand that the Ukrainian authorities have accepted the renewal of the mission's mandate for the next three months. We welcome that. The mission is

an invaluable source of information in terms of giving an overview of the situation in Ukraine.

The report submitted by Mr. Šimonović covers an important event in the history of the country — the election of Petro Poroshenko as the new President of Ukraine. Despite the obstacles placed before the people of the east in the exercise of their right to free expression, voting proceeded normally in the rest of Ukraine. As the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has stressed, international norms were respected. Mr. Poroshenko is therefore the new legitimate President of Ukraine and has been recognized as such. His talks in Normandy during the ceremonies to commemorate the 6 June 1944 landing, as well as his inaugural ceremony, are evidence of that. This is an important stage because the election has given birth to a process of political normalization.

Mr. Šimonović's third report sheds light on the important steps taken by the Government of Ukraine, particularly in the context of implementing the Geneva statement of 17 April. Round tables were organized to bring diverse sectors of Ukrainian society together, and a draft law entitled "Memorandum of concord and peace", which provides for the decentralization of power and guarantees on the status of the Russian language, has been adopted by the Rada.

The report also notes that investigations are under way into the serious human rights violations committed during the events of Maidan Square, as well as those that took place in 2 May in Odesa. While there has not yet been a full clarification of those tragic events, it should nonetheless be stressed that efforts have been made to that end. The cooperation of Ukraine with the United Nations human rights monitoring mission on this issue has also been significant. Those elements show that, despite the many difficulties that have arisen, Ukraine is in the process of achieving its political transition.

Despite such positive developments, eastern Ukraine, including Donetsk and Luhansk, has experienced a general deterioration in its security, human rights and humanitarian situation under the sway of illegal separatist armed groups. The third report stresses that arbitrary arrests, kidnapping, torture and murder now affect not only journalists, public officials and human rights activists, but the population as a whole. Mr. Šimonović has just informed us that the situation has grown even worse over the past week. In that regard, I remind the Council that eight OSCE observers have been held by separatists since late May, which poses an unacceptable obstacle to that Organization's mission.

The violence, as has already been confirmed, is fueled and sustained from outside. The presence of those foreign elements and all foreign support for them must cease. Control of transborder movements is critical. In such conditions, the Government of Ukraine is responsible for taking appropriate and proportional measures, with respect for international law, to combat the armed groups, protect the populace and ensure control of its own borders.

Those operations impact the population's access to basic services. Some residents have been forced to flee areas of confrontation and take refuge in other regions of Ukraine or in the Russian Federation. No one can deny that humanitarian needs exist. That is why humanitarian actors on the ground are already mobilized to respond. Coordinating all these responses not only among the various agencies but also with the Ukrainian authorities is essential. Indeed, the Ukrainian Government has taken all necessary steps to provide shelter to those who have been forced from their homes. I note that all regions of Ukraine, east and west alike, have responded to the call for solidarity. The sense of unity and of sharing a common destiny clearly exists in Ukraine.

As the mission report points out, the imposition of Russian law in Crimea, which was illegitimately annexed by Russia, has created a situation of judicial instability that prevents the local population from exercising its human rights and basic freedoms. Discrimination in hiring is rampant. Leaders and human rights activists of the Tatar community are being prosecuted. It is increasingly difficult to keep two nationalities, and those who refuse to inform the Russian authorities are now subject to criminal charges. The human rights of these people have been trampled.

Faced with the serious crisis in Ukraine, the authorities in Kyiv have made a number of good-will gestures. We welcome President Poroshenko's decision to propose a 15-point peace plan and to declare a week-long ceasefire. We note with satisfaction that his proposed truce was accepted yesterday by the armed groups in the context of the three-way meetings held among Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE following the meetings in Normandy. We encourage that dialogue to continue and we call on the armed groups in eastern Ukraine to lay down their arms, leave all illegally occupied public buildings, and engage honestly and

openly in a political dialogue that will allow them to make their claims in a legal and peaceful manner.

In such conditions, everything possible must be done to promote a return to calm, which is a sine qua non for the start of a political dialogue. That, I repeat, entails control of the Russian-Ukrainian border in order to halt the infiltration of equipment and armed men. The international community as a whole and all members of the Council must strive towards that end and support Kyiv's efforts. We welcome the declaration of the ceasefire enjoys the support of the Russian President. That support must be reflected on the ground at a time when there is cause for concern over word that wide-scale new military exercises are under way. In that light, we are heartened by the Russian President's call on the Russian Federation Council this morning to annul its authorization for the Russian Army to intervene on Ukrainian territory.

Today, there is no other path for Ukraine except that of unity and reconciliation. The European Union and France stand ready to offer Ukraine all their support in those efforts, as our Heads of State and Government recalled at their summit on 27 May.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank the briefers for their updates on political developments and the human rights situation in Ukraine. On political developments, we are pleased to note that, after months of conflict and escalating tensions, the people of Ukraine now have an opportunity to peacefully resolve the crisis that has destabilized their country.

We have carefully studied Petro Poroshenko's 15-point peace plan. We see it as the best way forward in the current circumstances to address the various issues that led to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We urge the people of Ukraine and the international community to support the plan. Of particular significance in the plan are the week-long ceasefire, steps to decentralize power, the protection of the Russian language and constitutional reform.

We welcome the support of Russian President Vladimir Putin for the ceasefire. We believe that it has played a role in the decision of the pro-Russian separatists to respect the ceasefire. We see it as a positive development that raises hopes for an end to the fighting that has caused substantial damage to property, left hundreds dead or wounded, displaced hundreds of thousands of people and disrupted livelihoods. We are pleased to note that the ceasefire is holding, as the Government has announced that there has been no fighting in eastern Ukraine since yesterday.

We take positive note of the promise of the rebels to release the observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) who have been held hostage since May. That is a significant development. According to news reports, a representative of the rebels at the negotiations held yesterday in Donetsk, in line with President Poroshenko's peace plan, stated that the release of the OSCE observers would "be one of the steps that will improve mutual understanding on both sides". We would like to see the OSCE observers released unconditionally and without delay.

All things considered, the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian crisis have been enhanced. We hope that the people of Ukraine will build on the momentum and goodwill generated by President Poroshenko's peace plan. We have consistently advocated dialogue as the way to resolve the crisis in Ukraine, and we are pleased to see that happening now.

On human rights, we have carefully examined the third report of the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, which covers the period of 7 May to 7 June. We note that the reporting period precedes the peace plan of President Poroshenko. The report links the deterioration of the human rights situation in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We condemn all violations of human rights, including abductions, torture, forced disappearances and illegal detentions. We would like to see the perpetrators brought to justice in order to send a strong message that impunity will not be tolerated. It is our hope that with the current ceasefire and eventual cessation of hostilities the human rights situation in eastern Ukraine will begin to improve.

In conclusion, we would like to stress the need for all concerned to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I, too, thank Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, for their briefings.

Luxembourg welcomes the resolute action taken by the democratically elected President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, to restore peace and stability in eastern Ukraine. We welcome his decision to take a first

essential step towards de-escalation by announcing the comprehensive 15-point peace plan and by establishing a unilateral ceasefire to allow the peace plan to be implemented. That decision has already had a positive effect, since last night it led to a separatist leader of the Donetsk region responding to the presidential initiative by committing, for his part, to observing a ceasefire until next Friday. We welcome the constructive role played by the current chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in that regard.

Russia has a key role to play in achieving a sustainable de-escalation of the situation. We call on that country to use all its influence with the separatists so that they stop the violence, lay down their arms once and for all and release the OSCE observers. We also call on Russia to take effective steps to stop the continuous flow of weapons and fighters to Ukraine and thereby to establish conditions conducive to the implementation of the peace plan announced on Friday by President Poroshenko.

A political solution is crucial to improving the living conditions of the Ukrainians in the areas controlled by separatist armed groups in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Luxembourg shares the concern of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights over the collapse of public order and respect for the rule of law in those areas. We are very concerned about the increasing number of abductions, detentions, cases of torture and killings by the separatists. The crimes and human rights abuses no longer target only local politicians, activists and independent journalists but also now affect the population of those regions in general.

The combined effect of the presence of armed groups committing illegal acts and the increased exchange of fire between separatists and the Ukrainian armed forces has had a negative impact on the human rights of the people living in areas that are under the control of separatists. The public services are severely disrupted. We are also concerned about the number of internally displaced people, which continues to increase.

The situation in Crimea is of concern, as well. The monthly reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights show that the human rights situation has severely deteriorated since the holding of the illegal referendum on 16 March and the annexation by Russia. Residents of Crimea who support the unity of Ukraine are intimidated and subject to discrimination. The fundamental freedoms ensured by Ukrainian law are being challenged and minorities live in fear.

Luxembourg remains firmly committed to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, which are basic principles affirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 68/262 of 27 March. Pending the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, we call on the authorities that are controlling Crimea to allow access for international observers, in particular, the United Nations human rights monitoring mission.

The third report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights underscores the practical steps taken by the Ukrainian Government to fulfil its obligations under the joint statement adopted on 17 April in Geneva by Ukraine, Russia, the United States and the European Union. A second crucial step was taken with the presentation of the peace plan and the establishment of a ceasefire.

The international community expects Russia also to send a clear signal of its willingness to achieve a true de-escalation. Apart from increased monitoring of its border and condemnation of violence by armed groups in eastern Ukraine, we call on Russia to continue to withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border and to refrain from a build-up of troops on the border. We also call for the order of the Federation Council authorizing the presence of Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine to be overturned. We note the step that has been taken today in that regard by the President of the Russian Federation.

The election of a President whose legitimacy is unquestionable, the dialogue established between Kyiv and Moscow since the election of President Poroshenko, his announcement of a peace plan and the declaration of a ceasefire are encouraging elements. We hope that they will be a decisive turning point in the search for a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. All good will must now be mobilized to take advantage of this opportunity and put an end to a crisis that has already caused too many casualties and suffering among the civilian population in eastern and southern Ukraine.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretaries-General Zerihoun and Šimonović for their briefings.

Recently, some areas in Ukraine have experienced continuous unrest, armed conflict and frequent violence, resulting in heavy tolls on people and property. China is deeply troubled by that situation. Conflict and violence have led to an increase in the internal displacement of persons in Ukraine and a shortage of water, electricity and food. We hope the United Nations and the international human rights and humanitarian agencies will adhere to the principles of neutrality and objectivity in their work.

On the question of Ukraine, I would like to highlight the following points. First, a political solution is the only way to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. We take note of the fact that President Poroshenko announced a peace plan and declared a unilateral ceasefire, and that the armed groups have also declared a ceasefire. China welcomes any efforts that would de-escalate tensions in Ukraine and hopes that all parties will keep calm and exercise restraint, take this opportunity to enhance mutual trust and implement the ceasefire in conflict areas in a practical manner so as to create favourable conditions for a political solution.

Secondly, the crisis in Ukraine has historical roots and a very real complexity. A comprehensive solution of the crisis calls for consideration of the overall situation. The solution should be long-lasting and balanced and take into account the legitimate rights, interests and demands of all regions and people in Ukraine, address the legitimate concerns of all and strike a balance of the interests of all sides.

Thirdly, relevant actors of the international community are actively engaged with each other on the question of Ukraine. That is conducive to addressing the concerns and differences of all parties through peaceful and political means and avoiding conflict and confrontation. Such momentum should be sustained. The Geneva four-party joint diplomatic statement and the road map of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which reflect the wisdom and good will of all sides, should be implemented effectively and comprehensively.

Fourthly, a swift and proper solution of the crisis in Ukraine is not only in the interest of the country and its people but also in the interest of regional peace and stability. China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine, and we will continue to hold a fair and objective position in actively taking part in the consideration of any proposals and initiatives for the easing of tensions and for finding a political solution. We will play a constructive role in that process.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Assistant Secretaries-General Zerihoun and Šimonović for their briefings.

The Republic of Korea appreciates the dedicated work of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and its informative and comprehensive report.

The recent report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission identified a number of worrying human rights concerns in Ukraine, particularly in the eastern region. We note with deep concern that the human rights situation in Donetsk and Lugansk has continued to deteriorate with increased violence and criminal activities by illegal armed groups. We are particularly disheartened to learn that lawlessness and violence, including abductions, arbitrary detentions, torture, harassment and killings are now affecting the broader population of those regions. Moreover, the continuing clashes between the armed groups and the Ukrainian forces exacerbate the situation, resulting in an increased loss of life, further displacement and the destruction of vital infrastructure.

In the light of such a volatile situation, we welcome the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to stop the escalation of violence and seek a peaceful settlement as shown in President Poroshenko's peace plan. We call for the illegal armed groups to reciprocate those efforts and immediately halt all acts of violence and lay down their arms. It is important to ensure the full implementation of the peace plan in order to achieve a sustainable solution to the crisis. In that regard, we welcome the fact that Russian President Putin has expressed support for the peace plan.

At the same time, we reiterate that an inclusive political process is the essential foundation for a stable and democratic future for all Ukrainian people. We encourage the Ukrainian Government, building on the legitimacy of the democratically elected president, to lead comprehensive reform measures that reflect the wishes of all Ukrainians. The protection of all ethnic and linguistic minorities should be a priority in that process.

Finally, we appreciate the ongoing diplomatic efforts towards the stabilization of Ukraine, in particular those of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union and

bilateral partners. We encourage all parties to continue such efforts to seek a peaceful political solution.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun and Mr. Ivan Šimonović for their briefings on the situation in Ukraine. Argentina will concentrate specifically on the theme and the focus of today's meeting, namely, to analyse the report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine.

In that regard, like our colleagues, we are concerned at the deterioration of the situation in the eastern part of Ukraine. The living conditions of the majority of the population, the actions of armed groups, the increasing number of armed persons and weapons, unilateral acts, worsening of violations of human rights and confrontations seem to spreading. Without any doubt we are all aware that those trends have to be dealt with in an urgent manner. The toll in human lives increases with each violent confrontation, and the lives and rights of residents of the affected areas are threatened. We therefore cannot be optimistic but I do believe that we are facing a scenario in which there is awareness that priority must be given to having an open dialogue and finding a political solution to this crisis.

However, we cannot ignore the violations of human rights described in the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The killing, torture, kidnapping, harassment, illegal detention and intimidation are unjustified. All allegations should be investigated and those responsible should be brought to justice. All the necessary measures must be taken to protect all the human rights of everyone in Ukraine and to ensure their full enjoyment, irrespective of ethnicity, language, cultural group, religion or the region of the country in which they live.

We have taken note and understood how the increase in violence impacts those living in the areas affected by the confrontations. It was therefore clear that a direct consequence of that would be an increase in displaced persons and in the number of people to leave the region — for example, from Donetsk — access to water in Slovyansk and other areas in the Donetsk region having been limited, along with limited access to health services and a lack of electricity and gas, as well as problems with the availability of food and medical supplies. All of that has served not just to subject the population to difficult living conditions; I wish to repeat that it demands a positive attitude to finding a solution to the crisis.

I will conclude my observations by mentioning the 15 points set out by the Government of Ukraine, which I appreciate. It is also very important, in particular with regard to points 14 and 15 of the plan, that discussions also take on board not just the talks between the State and the regions, armed groups and various minorities, but also the behaviour of the market. I say that because, in listening to Mr. Šimonović say that there is an extreme humanitarian crisis that is creating great suffering for a huge segment of the population, we also see in the document that has been circulated to us that the cost of food has increased dramatically, with some seasonal vegetables being four or five times more expensive than in the past.

We know that during crises, whether they be security, political, economic or social, some unscrupulous market players, who do not sit with us here to reconcile our differences — we do not even know where they are — well know how to speculate when it comes to the cost of food. No Valerie Amos can hold back, and no Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance can be up to the task, if we remain indifferent to such actions, which are ethically reprehensible. We should discuss that in the forum where it should be discussed: the organs of the United Nations.

We believe it is necessary to take every measure to address the situation effectively, while ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it, including in the areas that are still outside of Government control, and facilitating the conditions for the civilians who wish to leave the areas affected by the conflict to be able to do so.

Finally, I should like to make the following brief points. Argentina insists on the need to redouble efforts on the part of all stakeholders to demonstrate political will and the belief that the only acceptable way forward is through dialogue and that resorting to violence is not an option.

Secondly, Argentina will support any initiative that might genuinely contribute to putting an end to the violence and providing a space for constructive negotiations and reaching a political compromise among the parties.

Thirdly, the measures agreed in Geneva and the road map of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) continue to be a road map, the effective implementation of which by all

parties will allow us to de-escalate the situation and move forward in a process of national dialogue that generates trust among the various communities and provides assurance for all Ukrainians that their main demands will be heard and their rights respected.

Fourthly, we are pleased with the efforts being made by the democratically elected Ukrainian Government for a peaceful settlement to the country's situation and with the steps taken by the Russian authorities to the same end.

Fifthly, it is vital to combat the hate speech, discrimination, hostility and violence. Argentina reaffirms its respect for, defence of and belief that the international community and all its Member States must act within the framework of respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Along with the representative of Nigeria, we too hope that the rebels' promise to release the OSCE detainees will come to pass. In that connection, we have asked many times that they be released unconditionally and without delay.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General of Department for Political Affairs, and Mr. Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, for their briefings.

The report on Ukraine issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights covering the period 7 May to 7 June, unfortunately confirms the worsening of the human rights situation in that country, in particular in the south-east. Chad notes with concern that well-trained and -equipped armed groups are gaining strength and continue to occupy the majority of public and administrative buildings in many cities and communities, in particular in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. We also note an increase in the number of kidnappings, detentions, ill treatment, torture, killings and even summary executions by armed groups. The attacks of those groups are no longer just targeting journalists, elected or local officials or civil society activists, but are directly impacting civilians.

We condemn the abduction and detention of eight monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and we demand their immediate and unconditional release.

As the fighting intensifies, civilians are increasingly caught in the crossfire between the armed groups and the Ukrainian military. That results in a growing number of civilians killed and wounded, in particular women and children. Chad calls on all the parties involved to act with calm and restraint and urges countries with influence on them to help them make dialogue and reconciliation between Ukrainians a priority.

Given the environment of insecurity related to social and economic hardship, civilians are fleeing the areas of conflict. There are already more than 15,000 internally displaced persons, 64 per cent of whom are women and children, in particular in the east. Chad calls upon those involved in the fighting to facilitate access for humanitarian organizations to areas affected by military operations so that people's needs may be evaluated and taken into account.

The crisis in Ukraine is an ongoing threat to the freedom of expression. Many journalists have been killed, kidnapped, tortured or prosecuted. Hate speech on social networks continues to fuel tensions and widen the divisions between communities. In that regard, Chad calls upon all stakeholders to refrain from spreading messages of intolerance that incite discrimination, hatred or violence.

In spite of the bleak human rights situation in Ukraine, Chad is pleased with the new Government's efforts to restore public order, re-establish political dialogue and stabilize the country. In upholding Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity, Chad supports and encourages the implementation of the plan to peaceably resolve the situation, led by President Petro Poroshenko, and in particular the Government's unilateral decision to institute a ceasefire in the east of Ukraine from 20 to 27 June.

We also welcome the Ukrainian Parliament's vote on the resolution on the memorandum of understanding and peace that provides for a package of constitutional reforms of areas that include the decentralization of power, special status for the Russian language, reform of the judicial and police systems and enactment of an amnesty for participants in the anti-Government demonstrations in the East who agree to lay down their arms. Chad urges that the judiciary in Ukraine guarantee the victims' rights and commits to investigating those responsible for violating human rights, including the perpetrators of the events linked to the Maidan Square demonstrations, the murders that took place in January and February and the incidents on 2 May in Odesa.

In our view, the underlying causes of the crisis in Ukraine are structural ones, and if the country is to emerge from crisis its solutions must include those that take those realities into account. If they are to succeed, reconciliation and development among the country's communities must be achieved by peaceful and democratic means, with respect and guarantees for human rights for all. In order to deal with these challenges and to those linked to its territorial integrity, sovereignty and stability, Ukraine needs the support of the entire international community.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank Assistant Secretaries-General Ivan Šimonović and Tayé-Brook Zerihoun for their briefings. President Poroshenko's peace plan offers a fragile hope for a solution to this artificially induced crisis, which has been stoked by Russia's persistent anti-Ukrainian propaganda as well as a continuous influx of militants and weaponry from across Ukraine's Russian borders. A return to normality is badly needed after the months of destruction and lawlessness perpetrated by illegal armed separatists, which have led to a disturbing deterioration of human rights and the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, as the third report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission testifies.

The report is yet more proof that a pro-Russian militant insurgency has been the cause, and not the effect, of the serious human rights violations and a breakdown of law and order in the eastern regions of Ukraine, just as Russia's occupation of Crimea was the cause, and not the effect, of serious human and minority rights violations in that region. The report details cases of abductions, unlawful detentions, killings, torture, ill-treatment, forced disappearances, intimidation and harassment perpetrated by the armed separatists in eastern Ukraine. Criminality and looting have increased considerably in areas held by the militant separatists. Stalinist-style arbitrary executions by the insurgents have also been recorded, including within their own ranks or as revenge on those giving support to Government forces. One such case mentioned in the report is the execution of a farmer in front of his family for bringing food to Ukrainian forces.

The separatists have been carrying out increasingly brazen attacks using ever more sophisticated weapons. They possess anti-aircraft and anti-tank weaponry, automatic assault rifles, man-portable air defence systems and other arms. Last week, three T-64 tanks, BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launchers and other military vehicles crossed illegally from Russia into Ukrainian territory and were seen in the towns of Snizhne, Torez and Makiyivka. On 14 June, in a criminal act they readily admitted to, militants downed a Ukrainian military transport plane, leading to 49 deaths. Only a few minutes ago, while we were speaking in the Council, a military helicopter was again downed by the separatists, resulting in nine more deaths. We offer our sympathy to all those who have lost their loved ones and have been affected by the displacement, deprivation, intimidation and threats produced by this crisis.

We reiterate our long-standing position that Ukraine has a right and a duty to defend itself and to seek to restore law and order within its borders. Legitimate force must be used with due restraint, avoiding unnecessary damage to civilian infrastructure and civilian casualties. The best way to defeat the deadly mix of violence, hate and lawlessness that drives the pro-Russian insurgency is by upholding legality and the rule of law.

Mr. Šimonović's third report contains a number of recommendations to the Ukrainian Government. Lithuania and all the members of the European Union stand ready to assist Ukraine in reforming the security sector, the police and the rule of law. We welcome the steps that the Government of Ukraine has taken so far in implementing the 17 April Geneva statement, through a number of round tables, initiatives and legislative changes, including those aimed at decentralizing power. Other important legislative measures are in the process of being enacted, and Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović spoke about that at length. The Ukrainian Government has repeatedly offered to grant amnesty to those who lay down their arms. Just a few days ago, President Poroshenko went to eastern Ukraine to directly engage with the local population and authorities.

Welcome steps have also been taken to ensure the rights of ethnic minorities. In stark contrast to the situation in occupied Crimea, where the teaching of the Ukrainian and Tatar languages is being squeezed out, on 30 May Kyiv amended the framework curriculum to improve the teaching of minority languages as diverse as Armenian, Bulgarian, Tatar, Gagauz, Greek, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Korean, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Russian and Slovak.

President Poroshenko's most recent initiative, a 15-step plan for a peaceful settlement of the situation

in eastern Ukraine, which my country fully endorses, could be a real game-changer. While it was unfortunately greeted by more insurgent attacks, trilateral talks are taking place, and there has been some movement on exchanging prisoners and restoring public utility services.

The Ukrainian Government is doing its part to realize the peace agreement. The onus is now on the separatists and on Russia to do theirs. We note the fact that on Wednesday Russia's Federation Council is to revoke a resolution authorizing the use of Russian armed forces on Ukrainian territory, and we hope that implies all of Ukrainian territory. More, however, must be done. Russia has yet to clearly dissociate itself from the militant separatism in eastern Ukraine or to call on all the insurgents to lay down the arms. It has not yet ensured proper control of its borders with Ukraine or put an end to the flow into eastern Ukraine of Russian-made weaponry and mercenaries, as well as foreign fighters.

Importantly, Russia has yet to end the incendiary campaign against Ukraine that has been stoking militant insurgency in the eastern part of the country. Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable and must be respected by all. We reiterate our condemnation of the occupation of Crimea and stress that a forced redrawing of internationally recognized borders has no place in the twenty-first century.

Lithuania appreciates the work being done by the United Nations human rights monitoring mission and the special monitoring mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to provide regular updates on the situation in Ukraine. We welcome the Ukrainian Government's invitation to allow the extension of the United Nations mission for three more months. As noted by previous speakers, impartial reporting on human rights violations and developments on the ground is key to ensuring that facts are not manipulated.

Ukraine's continued openness to international monitoring shows its constructive spirit and stands in stark contrast to the actions of the separatists, who have done all they can to prevent reporting from the areas they hold captive. Let us not forget that they are still holding eight OSCE observers. We call for their immediate release and that of all the hostages in separatist hands. The Ukrainian peace plan offers a potential breakthrough for the restoration of peace and stability in line with the international principles of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. We hope that all the parties will seize this opportunity, although the events of a few minutes ago raise legitimate doubts as to the separatists' commitment to it.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank Assistant Secretaries-General Zerihoun and Šimonović for their briefings this morning.

Australia welcomes President Poroshenko's peace plan as a major opportunity for de-escalating the situation in Ukraine. We also welcome Ukraine's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire and the apparent support for it from separatist leaders. The peace plan, with its call for dialogue with legally elected authorities in the east, security guarantees for all parties who participate in negotiations, the release of hostages and further efforts to decentralize power, including through local elections, presents a welcome chance for addressing grievances and ending the crisis. Those are courageous initiatives and should have our support.

We urge separatists in eastern Ukraine to adhere to — and not take advantage of — the ceasefire. Reports of separatist attacks against Ukrainian border posts after the ceasefire's declaration must be condemned. Reports received in the last half an hour of a Ukrainian helicopter being shot down near Slovyansk, with nine dead, are a very bad development. Commitments to adhere to the ceasefire must be upheld. Australia understands that Ukraine's armed forces will use force to defend themselves if attacked. They have the right to do so. Of course, the Ukrainian Government must continue to ensure that any operations conducted by its armed forces are in line with international standards.

There are disturbing reports of the continued flow of illegal fighters, arms and other military equipment, including heavy weapons such as tanks, across the Russian border into Ukraine. The Council should not tolerate those continued and destabilizing violations of Ukraine's sovereignty. It is essential that Russia exercise control of its borders. We are also concerned by reports that Russia has again redeployed thousands of troops near the Ukrainian border in what appears to be a further calculated provocation. All those actions have been destabilizing eastern Ukraine. We again urge Russia to pull its troops back from the border, prevent the flow of illegal arms and fighters into Ukraine and call publicly for separatists in Ukraine to renounce violence.

More positively, we welcome President Putin's request to the Russian Duma today to repeal the resolution that purported to sanction Russia's use of force in Ukraine. No such use of force is legal or legitimate, but, if carried out, Putin's move to repeal it constitutes at least a signal of movement towards de-escalation. We also welcome the Secretary-General's continued engagement with the situation and the United Nations commitment to work with Ukrainian authorities to assist with internally displaced persons.

The third report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine presents a damning picture of the consequences of violent separatism in eastern Ukraine. The majority of human rights abuses are occurring in Donetsk and Luhansk, where separatist groups are active. In other areas of Ukraine, under Government control, concerted efforts are being made to ensure human rights are respected. The report commends Ukraine's own efforts to address grievances and build a society that respects the rule of law.

Ukraine has addressed constitutional reform, with a focus on the decentralization of power; announced parliamentary elections for later this year; worked to reform law enforcement bodies and taken steps to fight corruption. Ukrainian authorities have begun to investigate the Maidan protests and the 2 May Odesa incident. Timely accountability is crucial, so it is important that those investigations progress quickly.

In contrast to those positive steps, the situation in eastern Ukraine continues to deteriorate. The aggressive actions of separatist groups are having a negative impact on the human rights situation in areas of Ukraine under their control. As the report states, "with the demise of security, the rule of law and governance, the protection gap is widening". Civilians have been killed by armed groups. Abductions and detentions now affect the broader population in Donetsk and Luhansk, who live in a climate of fear and intimidation. We are affronted at the ongoing detention of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitors in eastern Ukraine, and we call again for their immediate release. Journalists in eastern Ukraine face attacks, abductions and detentions. Five have been killed during the crisis. We welcome the Council's press statement on the killing of journalists in eastern Ukraine. In a situation where misinformation abounds, it is critical that journalists be able to report freely and without fear.

Violence in the east, as we know, has disrupted social services. Schools have closed, hospitals are overcrowded and understaffed, running water and electricity are scarce in some areas, and food prices have increased rapidly. It is clearly increasingly difficult for civilians in eastern Ukraine to lead normal lives, but we note also the United Nations assessment that the situation in eastern Ukraine, unacceptable as it is, does not constitute a humanitarian crisis. The risk, of course, is that it could worsen and become a humanitarian crisis if armed separatists do not desist and if Russian assistance to them does not stop.

I should note that the human rights situation in Crimea has deteriorated markedly since Russia's illegal annexation of the peninsula. Freedom of assembly and religious belief are under threat. There are reports that some Crimean residents have been forced to surrender their Ukrainian citizenship. It is disturbing that only a small number of Crimeans were able to vote in Ukraine's presidential elections and had to do so by travelling to mainland Ukraine.

The report makes useful proposals for the way ahead, which deserve our support. Crucially, it emphasizes that all armed groups must immediately put an end to their violent activities and lay down their arms. President Poroshenko's peace plan and ceasefire provide the opportunity to do that — to end separatist violence — and all parties should seize this opportunity. A failure to resolve the situation by peaceful means will destroy the lives and livelihoods of even more Ukrainians. None of us in the Council should allow that to happen.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the briefings by Assistant Secretaries-General Šimonović and Zerihoun and express our appreciation for the efforts that the Secretary-General continues to make to bring the situation in Ukraine to an end.

The recent report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine continues to generate concern for our country with respect to the human rights situation in eastern and southern Ukraine, in particular in Donetsk and Luhansk. My delegation is particularly concerned by the alarming increase in human rights violations and abuses, which have primarily affected journalists, politicians and activists. We deeply deplore the deaths of two Russian journalists and an Italian journalist in Luhansk last week.

The increase in violations of the right to life, liberty and security that now affect civilians in those regions, as manifested in the attacks, kidnappings,

torture and harassment taking place, highlight the need to restore the rule of law and respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 68/262 and international law. We also reiterate our concern about the situation of internally displaced persons in Ukraine, which, according to the report, now total over 12,700 people, primarily women and children. That is a clear sign of the severity of the crisis.

Chile would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to put an end to the situation in the country and highlights the peace plan and the unilateral ceasefire recently announced by President Poroshenko. The announcement by separatist groups that they would comply with the ceasefire is an encouraging sign and should be reflected in their actions on the ground. Of equal importance are the proposed constitutional amendments in the Memorandum of concord and peace, which was drafted during the round table on national unity and adopted on 20 May by the Ukrainian Parliament, which are aimed at determining Ukraine's future in a democratic, transparent and inclusive manner.

We urge the parties to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis through direct political dialogue, exercise restraint, refrain from unilateral actions that could exacerbate tensions and participate in international mediation efforts such as the trilateral contact group, which includes Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Geneva agreement of 17 April. Similarly, we call for full respect for the rule of law, democracy and human rights in Ukraine, including the rights of all minorities.

The Government of Ukraine has the responsibility to maintain public order throughout the territory, in conformity with its constitutional norms and domestic legislation and with full respect for the rights and safeguards of all people in Ukraine. The monopoly of the use of force that the Government of Ukraine enjoys in its own territory, as is the case for any Government in the international community, should be exercised with full respect for human rights and in proportion to the situation at hand.

Chile reiterates its support for the appeal made by Mr. Šimonović for ensuring accountability with regard to violations and abuses of human rights in Ukraine, including the 222 cases of illegal detention, of the disappearance of 81 persons, and the deaths of more than 400 people in the east, including children, members of the armed forces and armed groups. It is equally essential that the authorities continue to investigate and finally bring to justice those who were responsible for the death of 48 persons in Odesa on 2 May, and that they look into why the security forces did not take more timely and decisive steps to prevent that tragedy.

We reiterate our support for the work of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and with the monitoring mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We are confident that those independent international mechanisms will continue to contribute to achieving a solution to the crisis.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Mr. President, I thank you for convening this meeting. Let me also thank Assistant Secretaries-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun and Ivan Šimonović for their respective briefings on the political and human rights situations in Ukraine. We commend the Secretary-General for his good offices and for his unwavering efforts to find a lasting political and diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

As we meet today, we are encouraged by several steps taken by the parties in the region to de-escalate the situation. Rwanda supports the 15-step plan of President Petro Poroshenko to end the crisis and welcomes the unilateral ceasefire he announced on Friday, 20 June. We hope that the plan will serve as a stepping stone for all parties involved to commit to finding a long-term peaceful solution to the crisis and the suffering of Ukrainians. In that regard, we welcome the decisions by the separatist groups to observe a ceasefire until Friday, 27 June. We see these parallel ceasefires as providing new momentum for the political talks in the framework of the peace plan presented by President Poroshenko. At the same time, we commend today's decision of President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation to request the Federation Council to revoke his right to use force in eastern Ukraine, as well as for his call on all parties to the Ukrainian conflict to cease hostilities and sit down at the negotiating table.

Despite the aforementioned possible developments, we are concerned at the alarming level of escalation, particularly criminal activities and reports of serious human rights violations. We condemn the continuing abductions, detentions, acts of ill treatment and torture, arbitrary arrests and sexual harassment. The reported cases of forced disappearances are extremely worrying. We urge the United Nations human rights monitoring

mission in Ukraine and the National Preventive Mechanism, in cooperation with the Ombudsperson, to continue their efforts to ensure that human rights of those who remain detained are upheld.

We further call for the immediate release of the monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, held captive since 26 and 29 May. The reported increase in the number of internally displaced persons is also concerning, but even more so are the reports of limited access to humanitarian actors, who are unable to reach the internally displaced persons in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. We urge all actors to ensure that those in need have access to humanitarian support. We equally urge the Government of Ukraine to establish a corridor for the safe passage of civilians and to provide the necessary security. The consequences of the violence in southern and eastern Ukraine have impacted the already dire economic situation, with a poverty rate of 24.7 per cent in youth unemployment and a lack of access to medical services. The delivery of medication and other necessities has been challenging as a result of instability.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the Council needs to unite and rally behind the people of Ukraine. We must show them that we are committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to our own responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Let me reiterate our call on the armed groups to disarm and adhere to the ceasefire, engage in constructive dialogue, and support the ongoing efforts to de-escalate the crisis.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank Mr. Šimonović and Mr. Zerihoun for their briefings this morning. We have taken note of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the third report, dated 15 June, of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, based on the findings of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine.

My delegation expresses its deep concern over the worsening situation in eastern Ukraine, and particularly in Donetsk and Luhansk, following the proliferation of weapons and a rise in the number of armed elements, which have in turn increased the number of kidnappings, incidents of forced detention and torture, and crime in that region. It has also led to a rise in the number of messages of hatred and media propaganda campaigns fabricated by those groups.

Jordan therefore reiterates its condemnation of all those acts, as well as its invitation to all those with influence in Ukraine to strive to de-escalate the situation and to reach a solution that can re-establish stability in eastern Ukraine and thereby guarantee the return of internally displaced persons to their homes and to avert a negative socioeconomic impact in Ukraine.

Jordan welcomes the progress achieved by the Ukrainian Government in implementing the recommendations contained in the two previous reports. We appeal to the Government to continue to accelerate its efforts in order to implement all the recommendations contained in the last report. We also welcome the commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to implementing the points of the Geneva statement of 17 April. We reiterate the need to respect international norms in all operations that may be launched to re-establish the State's authority throughout Ukrainian territory.

The democratic election of a new President in Ukraine last month represents a ray of hope for the Ukrainian people. Jordan pays tribute to the steps that President Poroshenko is beginning to take in order to ensure a return to stability in his country, starting with the visit he made to the regions of the east of Ukraine and his proposal for a peace plan that would put an end to the revolt in the east. The President has also proposed a general amnesty to separatists who elect to surrender their weapons, as well as to open safe corridors so that they can leave Ukraine. He is also continuing to work to promote the rights of minorities and communities that are not Ukrainian speakers. Those are all signs of good will on the part of the Ukrainian authorities that enhance the chances of achieving a peaceful solution to the crisis.

In conclusion, we appeal to the international community and the United Nations to combine their efforts to ensure the success of the peace plan and to continue with mediation and good offices in order to end the crisis and bring about a return to stability in Ukraine.

The President (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

I must note first and foremost that, yet again, during today's discussions some members of the Security Council did not attempt to objectively evaluate the situation in Ukraine and its root causes. They

made insinuations and even threats against Russia. We categorically refute them, and let us get to the heart of the matter now.

For the first time in Ukraine, fragile encouraging signs have begun to appear. That President Poroshenko has declared a ceasefire is certainly important; there can be no negotiations without one. Most important, however, is that the ceasefire should lead to dialogue among all the warring parties in order to reach a compromise acceptable to all, so that people living in south-east Ukraine feel without a doubt that they are an integral part of the country, with all the rights of citizens of that State, and that those rights are guaranteed, including by the Constitution.

We value the first consultations that were held in Donetsk between the authorities and official leaders of Ukraine and militias of south-east Ukraine, with the participation of the Russian Ambassador to Ukraine and the representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We expect that the agreement to support the ceasefire will be strictly adhered to by the parties.

Dialogue has begun, although the so-called Poroshenko plan did not originally include negotiations. Not surprisingly, the representatives of the east embraced him warily. They have no basis for trusting the Kyiv authorities. For our part, we are convinced that, without practical action and direct negotiations, the peace plan process will not be viable or realistic.

In order to normalize and resolve the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine, as well as with regard to the trilateral talks already launched on that matter, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a letter to the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly concerning the revocation of the Council's decision on the use of the Russian Army on the territory of Ukraine, dated 1 March.

From the outset, Russia has called for a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine through inclusive dialogue and swift constitutional reform. That was the goal of the Geneva statement of 17 April, as well as of the OSCE road map, which had our support along with that of many other States, but for some reason not that of Ukraine. We have repeatedly called for the relevant documents to be adopted by the Security Council, from short statements in support of the Geneva statement to resolutions that stress the importance of inclusive dialogue in resolving the humanitarian issues. Unfortunately, our initiatives are invariably met with stonewalling by Western colleagues.

That may be because Kyiv did not adhere to many of the provisions of that document, even though they had made a commitment to refrain from violence, intimidation and provocation. Instead of halting its punitive operations against its own people, Kyiv actually intensified them.

Kyiv has not moved to disarm illegally armed groups, particularly the co-called Right Sector and other extremists, along with various regional militias such as the Dnepr and Azov and the legally dubious National Guard.

The Ukrainian crisis is strongly coloured by the fact that it is a direct consequence of the violent and unconstitutional change of Government in February. Residents of the south-east were treated with contempt by the self-proclaimed authorities. They copied the tactics of the Maidan and took up arms in order to declare their legal grievances, but then they were declared separatists and terrorists, and punitive operations were launched against entire cities with the use of heavy artillery and aviation. For a long time, even against the backdrop of President Poroshenko's peace promises, those operations only gathered momentum, in both intensity and scope.

Furthermore, the ceasefire was constantly violated. Shelling even reached Russian territory, as a result of which people were wounded and buildings were destroyed in the neighbourhood of the Dolzhansky Novoshahtinsk crossing point. The humanitarian situation remains extremely difficult, with an unabated flow of refugees to Russia. We are trubled by the refusal of the Ukrainian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to cooperate with us in that area. We call for the removal of artificial obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian supplies and for the establishment of safe corridors for the evacuation of civilians from combat zones. The corridors promised by President Poroshenko have yet to be created.

Even under bullets, refugees continue to leave Ukraine. Upwards of 450,000 Ukrainian citizens have crossed the border and remain in Russia. The majority are living with friends and family, but in the border regions alone there are more than 220 temporary shelters, including tent cities. There are currently more than 19,000 people living in such accommodation, including more than 5,500 children. However, it is

difficult for the central and southern districts to absorb such an influx, and new welcome centres are being established across Russia. Across the country, people are collecting humanitarian aid for the residents of south-east Ukraine. I will not hide the fact that we are deeply disturbed that some of our colleagues on the Council who are so prone to play the humanitarian card when they find it politically expedient seem indifferent in this case.

With respect to the latest report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Ukraine, there is actually no reason for the Council to be discussing the report. The monitoring mission was established by the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the invitation of the Ukrainian authorities. Since the Security Council did not provide instructions for the report, logic would dictate that the report not be submitted to the Council.

However, it is surprising that Kyiv, which itself invited the mission, is refusing to cooperate with it, particularly with respect to the investigation of the tragedy in Odesa. The report notes the lack of progress in OSCE's parallel investigations, now numbering six, which simply shows the efforts being made to drown the truth in paper, and confirms the need for a comprehensive international investigation into the Odesa tragedy, as we have stated from the outset. As for the Russian Federation, we did not invite the mission and made no recommendations to it. We view the inclusion of the recommendations in the document as inappropriate.

The human rights situation in Crimea should clearly not be the subject of the report. We also believe that the mission's inability to provide an assessment under the pretext of a lack of access is nonsense. The consequences of Kyiv's action to cut off water in Crimea are not mentioned in the report. However, the lack of access did not prevent the mission from making politically abhorrent statements on the deteriorating situation in Crimea. There are several politically motivated references in the report. According to the guidelines for drafting the report, it seems that only verified information should be used. That is probably correct but that limitation has always benefited Kyiv in the report.

There are a number of references in the document to so-called reports of alleged human rights violations by armed groups in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. However, why are many details overlooked with regard to the residents of the area and journalists, as well as videos showing artillery strikes on residential areas in southeastern towns and casualties among civilians as a result of the indiscriminate use of force by the Government? The entire world saw the pictures of the Ukrainian air strikes on the Luhansk administrative building on 2 June, which could in no way be called a military target. Civilians were killed. Despite the fact that colleagues of the OSCE observers underscored that the strikes were carried out by surface-to-air rockets, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for some reason makes the absurd assumption that it was an unsuccessful attempt by militia to shoot down a Ukrainian plane. Such a statement has been rebutted by numerous sources.

In the section on propaganda, the report overlooks the United Nations helicopter incident. For some reason the incident is not mentioned. However, in order to deal with the situation on the ground, we will have to determine the position with regard to the helicopters that had previously been provided to Ukraine for United Nations operations and if they had really been repainted. That should have been included and the relevant United Nations resources provided to that end.

A separate discussion on the situation of journalists is required. The report notes that on 24 May, an Italian photojournalist, Andrea Rocchelli, and his colleague, Andrey Mironov, were killed. On 17 June, following mortar fire, the Russian journalists Igor Kornelyuk and Anton Voloshin were killed in Luhansk. There needs to be a careful investigation of those events. There are too many reports that indicate that it was a targeted attack.

The detention, intimidation and beating of journalists continue. In addition to the cases in the report, we would note the 14 June incident, in which two correspondents of the Zvezda television channel were brutally beaten by the Ukrainian armed forces in order to obtain confessions. The Ukrainian authorities then boasted that the journalists had apologized for the reporting. There are continuing reports of journalists being persecuted for carrying out their work, as well as their expulsion from the country. In general, we must say that the report undermines trust in the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and gives rise to serious questions as to whether it is appropriate for the mission to continue its work.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): It is of great importance that the Security Council is having a meeting on the current situation in Ukraine. I would like to thank all members of the Security Council for their statements. I am grateful for their support of our President's plan for the peaceful settlement of the situation in eastern Ukraine.

We thank Assistant Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun for his briefing. We welcome the report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, presented by Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Šimonović, who has travelled to Ukraine many times. The report contains conclusions and recommendations that are important to the Government of Ukraine and highly valuable to our country. Ukraine is ready to further develop and deepen cooperation with the United Nations human rights bodies. We welcome the decision to extend the United Nations human rights monitoring mission mandate for another term.

The report notes the continuation of the worrying trends in Crimea, including instances of enforced disappearances, detentions, violence and ill treatment by illegal paramilitary groups, or the so-called Crimean self-defence, often targeting journalists, human rights defenders and political opponents. It also notes impunity for human rights violations. The judicial system remains practically paralysed. Crimean residents face serious difficulties in exercising their civil and political rights. Following threats, many Crimeans have been forced to give up Ukrainian citizenship. There are only two Ukrainian schools in Crimea, one of which has already been compelled to become Russian and its director forced to resign. Today, we learned that unknown armed men have occupied a madrasa, or Muslim religious school, near Simferopol.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the officially confirmed number of internally displaced persons from Crimea, Ukraine, is more than 12,000, who have been forced to leave the peninsula due to the unbearable living conditions created by the occupying authorities. That is truly alarming. We demand that the Russian Federation, which has temporarily occupied the Crimean peninsula, ensure the protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens of all nationalities who remain in Crimea, that is, Ukrainians, Russians, Crimean Tatars and others, including their right to freedom and to security and the rights of religious communities.

Given the ongoing systematic violations of human rights in Crimea, the Ukrainian side hopes that the situation on the peninsula shall continue to receive the attention of the international community. It supports the report's call on the occupying authorities in the Crimea to provide access for independent international experts, primarily the United Nations monitoring mission.

The report, inter alia, contains updates on the information regarding the tragic events in Odesa. It is significant that the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to investigate both the tragic Maidan events and those of 2 May in Odesa have been acknowledged in the report. The assistance that the law enforcement bodies provided to the mission and their observance of the proper respect for the rights of those arrested in Odesa are noted with appreciation. We thank the human rights monitoring group for the objective approach to the assessment of the events. As of the present moment, several suspects have been arrested. State criminal experts were able to establish the cause of death of the victims. The investigation continues and the official results will be made public as soon as they have been established.

In the report, special attention is paid to the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine. The document notes the growing number of illegal actions committed by highly organized illegal armed groups in violation of national and international laws. It is very important to mention that human rights violations and humanitarian problems occur only in those cities that are temporarily under the control of illegal armed groups, such as Slovyansk, Kramatorsk and Snizhne. The illegal activities of those groups include murder, torture, the seizure of administrative and public buildings, the kidnapping and detention of civilians, including journalists, taking hostages, including observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and intimidating and terrorizing the local population. The groups are capturing infrastructure management buildings, causing disruption to the operation of some water and electricity supply facilities that have suffered gunfire. Terrorists are deliberately waging a war against civilians, creating barriers to the free movement of people, including disabled persons. Such people are cynically used as live shields. We express our deepest condolences over the deaths of the foreign

journalists, Italian and Russian, who became victims of the fighting.

From the very beginning, I would like to stress that there is no humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The humanitarian problems in some parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are caused only by the activities of pro-Russian illegal armed groups that have managed to seize control of the cities. On the other hand, the Ukrainian Government is doing its utmost to exercise control over the situation, to restore law and order and to provide help for all our citizens. The President of Ukraine ordered the establishment of all necessary conditions for the civilian population willing to leave cities temporarily seized by terrorists through safe corridors.

The State emergency services were assigned to establish a multifunctional coordination centre in order to transport affected persons, as well as to maintain the health-care and social needs of the civilians. The local authorities of other regions of Ukraine ensure the accommodation of people arriving from the area who have suffered terrorist attacks. The National Coordination Centre is assisting in the temporary accommodation of the citizens of Ukraine who are moving from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to other regions of the country. Special attention has been given to the relocation of children who are being sent to and accommodated at summer camps in all regions of the country.

The Ukrainian Government is demonstrating its ability to bring peace to people. The authorities of liberated cities like Mariupol and others are now able to deliver the message of peace to other cities, whose populations are still influenced by false messages containing anti-Ukrainian propaganda. As a practical step, the President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, held a large, inclusive meeting-dialogue last week with the true representatives of the eastern region of the country — representatives of local communities and of the business and political elite of Donetsk and Luhansk and legitimately elected mayors.

In his inaugural speech on 7 June, President Poroshenko stressed that he was assuming the office in order to preserve the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Ukraine, ensure sustainable peace and guarantee security for all citizens. Last Friday, President Poroshenko presented his plan for the peaceful settlement of the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine, which I assume the Security Council supports. Council members will have noticed that the plan includes three major parts: ceasefire, restoration and dialogue.

President Poroshenko has already initiated the implementation of the plan by ordering a unilateral ceasefire in the east of Ukraine. I would now like to quote from the speech with which my President addressed the nation last Sunday and in which he explained the details of the plan.

> "The immediate implementation of the peace plan will open the path to political dialogue. I invite legally elected representatives of local Government, non-governmental organizations and everyone else to join in the dialogue. Diametrically opposed views will not be a barrier to participation in the negotiations. I am ready to talk with those who have erred or who mistakenly took a position in support of separatism, but not, of course, people who were involved in acts of terrorism, murder or torture. Moreover, I guarantee safety for all participants in the negotiations, for anyone who wants to speak the language of argument instead of the language of weapons.
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> "It is important to state that the issue of the territorial integrity of Ukraine is not on the table. We hear and take into account the specific opinions of Donbas citizens, but we cannot and will not transform Ukraine, where there is a large consensus on the issues of unity, territorial structure, language and geopolitical orientation, to satisfy them.
>
> "What then is the way out of this situation? It is in a broad decentralization of power. Decentralization provides for the expansion of the rights of regions on issues of historical memory, cultural traditions and language policy. Those issues will never again divide the country. Local communities in Donbas will have the right to freely use the Russian language along with the State language."

The plan has been supported by major world leaders and international organizations — the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. Ukraine is committed to strictly following a path of building peace. In response to the peace-restoring initiative, the gunmen and terrorists launched continued armed attacks, blatantly violating the truce terms.

We welcome the intention of the Russian President to cancel of Federation Council decision on the use of

armed forces on the territory of Ukraine. However, in areas of the Russian Federation adjacent to the border with Ukraine, a notable increase in the concentration of manpower and military equipment of the Russian Federation's armed forces has been witnessed in recent days.

Ukraine calls on all international partners to support our sustained efforts to restore peace and the unconditional implementation by all sides of the 17 April Geneva statement. We have asked the international community to support President Poroshenko's plan for the peaceful settlement of the situation in the eastern part of Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.